

The History of  
Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter  
Holy Royal Arch Masons, P.H.A.  
State of Florida & Jurisdictions

(1881 through 8 January 2014)



Royal Arch Masonry began in the State of Florida in 1881 when a group of Master Masons petitioned the Grand Chapter of the District of Columbia to send a representative to our State for the purpose of establishing a Royal Arch Chapter. The petition was made to M. Ex. J. Brooker Hutchings, Grand High Priest of the District of Columbia. The requested representative came and brought with him a sufficient number of Royal Arch Masons to confer the capitular degrees properly. The Degrees were conferred, the officers were elected. The Chapter was established and was named Zerubbabel Chapter No. 15, U D. Zerubbabel Chapter worked as a U.D. Chapter for nearly two years. Having been pleased with the work of the Chapter, the Grand Chapter of the District of Columbia granted to Zerubbabel Chapter its Warrant. The Warrant was granted August 12, 1883 and was signed by M. Ex. John H. Burrill, Grand High Priest and Rt. Ex J. B. Washington, Grand Secretary. Having received the warrant, Zerubbabel Chapter became the mother Chapter of Royal Arch Masonry in Florida. The nucleus of the membership lived in Jacksonville but there were other members of this Chapter who lived in other cities in the State, and they encouraged Master Masons to aspire and petition for the advance degrees.

These Royal Arch Chapters were also established and chartered under the authority of the Grand Chapter of District of Columbia. Hiram Chapter No. 17 at Jacksonville in 1884; Aaron Chapter No. 18 at Key West in 1884; King Hiram Chapter No. 20 at Fernandina in 1887; Mt. Pleasant Chapter No. 26 at Palatka in 1894; Keystone

Chapter No. 30 at St. Augustine in 1895. These six chapters being in obedience to the Grand Chapter of the District of Columbia petitioned that Grand Chapter to be released for the purpose of establishing a Grand Chapter in and for the State of Florida. The petition was granted by M. Ex. John M. Dorster, Grand High Priest and Rt. Ex. J. H. Burrill, Grand Secretary to be effective on the day and date of the establishment of the Florida Grand Chapter. A convention of Royal Arch Masons was called to meet in the City of Jacksonville in the month of August 1897.

The Convention was held Wednesday, August 29, 1897, at which time the Grand Officers were elected, the Jurisdiction was declared. The chapters surrendered their Charters to the Grand Chapter of the District of Columbia. The Grand Chapter was named Union Grand Chapter Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida and the subordinate Chapters were re-chartered and renumbered thus: Zerubbabel Chapter No. 1 at Jacksonville; Hiram Chapter No. 2 at Jacksonville; Keystone Chapter No. 3 at St. Augustine; Aaron Chapter No. 4 at Key West; Mt. Pleasant Chapter No. 5 at Palatka, and King Hiram Chapter No. 6 at Fernandina. The first Officers elected for the Grand Chapter in 1897 were Most. Ex. Reuben S. Mitchell, Grand High Priest, Rt. Ex. Elias Sellers, Deputy Grand High Priest Rt. Ex. Lucius B. H. Littles, Grand King Rt. Ex. Benjamin Dilworth, Grand Scribe, Rt. Ex. Joseph Williams, Grand Secretary and Rt. Ex. William J. Henry, Grand Treasurer.

On August 29, 1897 The Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Masons for the State of Florida and its Jurisdiction launched upon its career of usefulness, to become strong and vigorous in disseminating and perpetuating the tenets of Royal Arch Masonry. The records for the Grand Chapter for 1898-1899 have not been found and may be lost forever, but the record for 1900 shows a change in some of the Grand Officers elected in 1900. Most Ex. Reuben S. Mitchell, Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. James R. Shackelford, Deputy Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. H. B. Jordan, Grand King; Rt. Ex. W. A. Glover, Grand Scribe; Rt. Ex. Benjamin Dilworth, Grand Treasurer and Rt. Ex. Michael J. Preston, Grand Secretary. There was no Annual Convocation held in these years: 1901, 1903, 1905, 1907, 1933 and 1936. Because of the lack of readable records it cannot be determined why the Grand Chapter did not meet in the odd numbered years from 1901 to 1907, but it is believed that the Annual Convocations in 1933 and 1936 were deferred because of the national economic depression. Those who had jobs could not leave their jobs. The Chapters sent in their small reports but there were no meetings held.

During the early years of our Masonic history, each grand body met independently of the other grand bodies. The Royal Arch Grand Chapter met in the month of August and would go from city to city AS did the other grand bodies. In 1908 the Grand Chapter held its annual convocation at Ocala and along with the other business transacted; John G. Riley was duly elected Grand High Priest. Most Ex. Reuben S. Mitchell had been Grand Master in 1888 to 1890. He had served as Grand High Priest from 1897 to 1906 along with the work he had done with the Knight Templars had become an old man and would not accept the nomination as

Grand High Priest any more, but saw that a man equal to himself were elected. Most Ex. John G. Riley brought to the office of Grand High Priest much prestige, culture, and a high quality of leadership. He was a graduate of Florida Baptist Memorial College at Live Oak, and Morehouse College at Atlanta, Ga., he was also an artful craftsman in Freemasonry. With these members in the leadership role, Royal Arch Masonry was able to make much progress. To give the Grand High Priest assistance, the following officers were elected in 1908: Benjamin Dilworth, Deputy Grand High Priest; John H. Dickerson, Grand King; W. A. Glover, Grand Scribe; H. B. Jordan, Grand Treasurer and N. B. Hester, Grand Secretary.

With Most Ex John G. Riley leading this Grand Chapter the membership hastily increased. New chapters were established in many cities. This increase continued until 1929 when the National Depression crippled business and employment.

M. W. John H Dickenson served the Jurisdiction as Grand Master from 1899 to 1916 and served the Grand Chapter as Grand King from 1908 to 1918. In that year he surrendered all earthly possessions to join those in the celestial world. Because of the passing of R. EX. John H. Dickerson Grand Master D. D. Powell asked to serve the Grand Chapter as Grand King. In 1929 the National Economic Depression crippled business and employment and all organizations solely supported by African Americans were terribly affected. The membership and Chapters grew less each year until there were only twelve Chapters on the Grand Chapter roster in 1938. Some of these did not have the constitutional number to hold their Charters but asked the Grand Chapter to permit them to hold the Charter for they hoped for a better day. This decrease in Chapters and members was not caused by poor leadership but because of vast unemployment.

As mentioned before all Grand Bodies met at different times but in this era unemployment and the attendance at each Grand meeting was very poor which gave the impression to the grand heads that these separate meetings was causing our members much hardship; therefore, the grand heads came to the agreement that all grand bodies would meet simultaneously at the time the Grand Lodge would meet. This practice continues to this day.

Then came the WWII when our young men were taken away by the armed forces because the nation was at war. The National Economic Depression ended and businesses showed improvement, as well as employment increase. With these economic improvements Royal Arch membership showed a small increase and three subordinate Chapters raised their Charters. Most Ex. John Riley had become a man of many years by this time but he put forth his best effort to bring Royal Arch Masonry up to its former standing as it had been in past years.

The ardent work and life of Most Ex. John G. Riley came to a close in October 1953 and he was laid to rest with the immortals amid the sighs and tears of many who considered him to have been the best informed Mason in the Jurisdiction. When his life ended he had given to the Grand Chapter forty-five years of continuous leadership.

Because of the passing of Most Ex. John G. Riley the duties of leadership and guidance passed to the hands of Rt. Ex. W. M. Solomon, Deputy Grand High Priest who carried on the work and presided over the Grand Convocation when the Grand Chapter met in 1954. At this Convocation Fred Alexander was elected Grand High Priest, and the following Companions were elected Grand Officers with him: Rt. Ex. W. M. Solomon Deputy Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. Charles H. Henry, Grand King; Rt. Ex. Preston Rainey, Grand Scribe; Rt. Ex. W. Kickliter, Grand Treasurer and Rt. Ex. James A. Foster, Grand Secretary.

Most Ex. Fred Alexander came to the office of Grand High Priest with vast experience in business, excellent qualities in the area of leadership and a vast amount of Masonic knowledge. These Grand Officers took courage under new leadership and lifted their eyes toward the sun and began a new march for success under the banner of Royal Arch Masonry.

This new ascendancy created new interest and a new concern for Royal Arch Masons. The National Economic condition was on the incline. Royal Arch membership increased. Chapters raised their Charters and many new Chapters were established. A central office was established at Jacksonville in the Masonic Temple which has been the center of all communication relative to Royal Arch Masonry. A functioning committee on Foreign Correspondence has been appointed and this Committee has kept up correspondence with the Grand Chapters in other States and the Bahamas Islands. The Grand Officers have traveled the State carrying the message of Royal Arch Masonry. W. M. Solomon, Deputy Grand High Priest, gave his service in this particular endeavor until his death.

Union Grand Chapter became a member of the General Grand Conference of Grand Chapters of America and has shown great interest in that National Body to the extent that the General Grand Conference has met in Florida twice in eight years; 1961 at Jacksonville and 1969 Miami. A Grand Commission on Education has been established to develop a system by which Royal Arch Masons would be able to assist young men and women to obtain an education in the area of their choice. Many High School graduates have received College Scholarships from the effort of this Commission. Those who have served and are now serving on this Committee: Rev. E. A. Crumady. (deceased), Mr. P. E. Williams, employed by the Florida State Board of Public Education; Dr. Andrew Robinson, Principal of William

M. Raines High School, Mrs. Sadie Tillis, Principal, S. P. Livingston Elementary School; Mrs. Brilla Thomas Stephens, Instructor Edward Waters College; Mrs. Ruby F. Herndon, Chief Clerk in the Grand Lodge Office; Mr. Otha Nealy, employed by the Board of Public Instruction of Alachua County; Mr. Gaston C. Cook, former Principal Junior High School at Gainesville, (retired); Mrs. Hortense Brewington, instructor in the Public System of Duval County; Mrs. Helen T. Hawkins, instructor in the Public System of Duval County; Mr. William Blanding Instructor in the Public School System at Sebring, Fl. and James A, Hawkins, Grand Secretary, Royal Arch Masons.

The Royal Arch Special Charity Fund was established in 1968 for the purpose of giving aid to those Companions who have been loyal through the years and have been overtaken by misfortune, over which they had no control, and need the help and assistance of the Grand Chapter. In the short time of its existence this fund has come to the relief of many who have made request thereto.

These accomplishments have been made under the dynamic leadership of Most. Ex. Fred Alexander, Grand High Priest. At the 1970 Grand Convocation the following Grand Officers were elected: Most. Ex. Fred Alexander, Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. Carey P. Bentley, Deputy Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. Curtis Sams, Grand King; Rt. Ex. William A. Gipson, Grand Scribe; Rt. Ex. Charles A. Tillis Grand Treasurer and Rt. Ex. James A, Hawkins, Grand Secretary.

In 1971, Rt. Ex. John A. Smith was elected Grand King, and Rt. Ex. Samuel A. Bolden was elected Grand Scribe, with Reverend Charles E. Pinkston serving as Grand Chaplain. In 1975, Rt. Ex. James A. Hawkins, Grand Secretary, was summoned home to that Mansion above to be with the Grand Architect of the Universe. His term was completed by Rt. Ex. Daniel L. Lauray, who also served the Grand Chapter as Grand Medical Director for several years. In the month of September 1975 Elizabeth Royal Arch Chapter No. 60 at Daytona Beach was chartered. The charter was later surrendered by District Deputy Oscar Hughes for lack of members in April 1996. Some members became affiliated with Waymon Chapter No. 78 at Daytona Beach.

In 1979, the Grand Chapter was dealt a severe blow when Most Ex. Grand High Priest Fred Alexander was called by the Supreme Grand High Priest of the Universe to serve the Grand Chapter above. His accomplishments are too numerous to mention. Rt. Ex. Carey P. Bentley was elected to succeed Grand High Priest Alexander. He served faithfully for one year and resigned due to ill health. He was elected Grand High Priest Emeritus. Those serving under his administration were: Rt. Ex. Cleveland J. Mackey, Deputy Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. Charles T. Maxwell, Grand King; Rt. Ex. Herbert Chisholm, Grand Scribe; Rt. Ex. Richard B. Brown, Grand Treasurer; Rt. Ex. Albert E. Fogle, Grand Secretary and Rt. Ex. W.H: Richardson, Grand Chaplain.

In 1980 the role of leadership was undertaken by Most Ex. Cleveland J. Mackey, Harmony Chapter 107, who served the Grand Chapter faithfully until 1987 when his health began to fail him. Those serving under his administration were: Rt. Ex. Charles T.

Maxwell, Deputy Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. Johnny McCray, Grand King; Rt. Ex. Roston Bullard, Grand Scribe 1980-1983; Rt. Ex. Carl Finerson, Grand Scribe 1983-1987; Rt. Ex. Albert E. Fogle, Grand Secretary; and Rt. Ex. Richard B. Brown, Grand Treasurer. Grand High Priest Mackey served the Grand Chapter admirably and was held in very high esteem by all members of the Masonic Family. One of the first acts of his administration was to change the accounting system procedure. He was assisted greatly by the expertise of Grand King, Rt. Ex. Johnny McCray, a certified public accountant. Exceptional peace and harmony prevailed under this administration. In November, 1987, Grand High Priest Mackey passed to his celestial home above. Rt. Ex. Charles T. Maxwell, Deputy Grand High Priest, who had worked very closely with Grand High Priest Mackey, especially during his period of illness, was called upon to serve out the unexpired term of Grand High Priest Mackey.

In 1988 during the 91st Annual Convocation, Deputy Grand High Priest Charles T. Maxwell was elected Most Ex. Grand High Priest. Those serving under his administration were: Rt. Ex. Johnny McCray, Deputy Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. Carl Finerson, Grand King; Rt. Ex. Eugene C. Johnson, Grand Scribe; Rt. Ex. Richard B. Brown, Grand Treasurer; Rt. Ex. Henry B. Parker Jr., Grand Secretary and Rt. Ex. Henry Ely, Grand Chaplain. One of the first acts of Grand High Priest Maxwell, were to move the daily operations of the affairs of the Grand Chapter back into the Masonic Temple, in Jacksonville. This operation had been in Clermont, Florida for several years with Rt. Ex. Grand Secretary Fogle. In updating the Grand Chapter's official records, it was discovered that during the transition of records and documents of the Grand Chapter, many records were misplaced between Clermont, Florida and the Grand Chapter's Office in the Masonic Temple at 410 Broad Street in Jacksonville, Florida.

An improved method for updating of the Grand Chapter's official records was launched. The two room office suite was revitalized and redecorated and a multifunctional copy machine was purchased. The financial status of the Grand Chapter was put on a sound basis. Under the capable and dynamic leadership of Grand High Priest Maxwell and his very efficient cabinet, the expectations for growth and expansion were tremendous. Grand Master George Washington and the Grand Trustees of The Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida designated the 4th floor of the Masonic Temple for office space and activities of the York Rite Bodies, which included the Holy Royal Arch Masons and the Heroines of Jericho. The office was expanded to a four room suite which includes offices for : (1) The Most Excellent Grand High Priest, (2) Right Excellent Deputy Grand High Priest, (3) Right Excellent Grand Secretary and Right Excellent Grand Treasurer, (4) Office Clerk and daily operations. The entire 4th floor, with the exception of the kitchen space, was painted red and white. In 1993 Mt. Zion Chapter No. 116 of Miami petitioned the Grand Chapter to have its name changed to Carey P. Bentley Chapter No. 116, in honor of Past Grand High Priest Emeritus Carey P. Bentley; their request was granted. Jonathan Chapter No. 198 of Dunellon-Williston was reactivated, and W.H. Shirley Chapter No. 199 of Tallahassee was chartered.

In April 1994 during the 91st Annual Grand Convocation, Deputy Grand High Priest Johnny McCray was elected Most Excellent Grand High Priest. Those serving under his

administration were: Right Excellent Carl Finerson, Deputy Grand High Priest; Rt. Ex. Eugene C. Johnson, Grand King; Rt. Ex. Henry B. Parker Jr., Grand Scribe; Rt. Ex. Richard B. Brown, Grand Treasurer; Rt. Ex. Lewis S. Thurston, Grand Secretary and Rt. Ex. Henry Ely, Grand Chaplain. Most Excellent Grand High Priest, Johnny McCray, with his great leadership skills and organizational ability had a unique vision for moving the Grand Chapter forward initiated programs to support the United Negro College Fund with annual donations; Boys Scouts, Girls Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, the Sickle Cell Foundation, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Golden Heritage Life Membership, donation of Thanksgiving baskets to the needy, annual and semi-annual contributions to local charitable organizations. The Grand Chapter has always been a great supporter of education and, under the administration of Most Worshipful Grand Master Dr. George Washington, supported the Education Commission with a donation of \$2150.00.

On September 3, 1996, the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter, Holy Royal Arch Masons and the Most Worshipful Union Grand Court made a donation of \$200.00 to Ms. Tequila De Shay Smith, a nursing student at Florida A & M University, to assist her in her efforts to obtain her nursing degree. In an effort to continue to become active and supportive of selected Charities, (those mentioned above), ten percent (10%) of our total operational budget, eight thousand (\$8000.00) for the fiscal year of 1996-97, was donated as follows: a United Negro College Fund, donation was made at the 1997 Lou Rawls Telethon by the Most Excellent Grand High Priest Johnny McCray, as well as the following donations:

Sickle cell foundation	\$ 500.00
Education Com. Chair Rt. Ex. G. Henry Williams	\$2000.00
NAACP Legal Defense Fund	\$ 500.00
Boy Scouts of America (Florida)	\$ 250.00
Girl Scouts of America (Florida)	\$ 250.00
NAACP Golden Heritage Donation	\$ 500.00
YMCA of Florida First Coast	\$ 500.00
Other Charitable Organizations	<u>\$3500.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8000.00</b>

In our endeavor to increase our active membership through recruitment, maintaining our current membership, reclaiming those Companions and Chapters who had fallen by the way-side, and the Chartering of New Chapters the following is the result: In 1995, Jasper Chapter No. 49 was Chartered; and the following Chapters were Re-activated: Maxwell Chapter No. 115, Crestview, Florida; Pompano Chapter No. 164, Pompano Beach, Florida; and R.P. Ellis Chapter No 195, Milton, Florida,

#### Deputies and High Priest Council

The Deputies and High Priest Council, was organized under Most Ex. Grand High Priest Alexander, and directed for several years under the leadership of Companion Howard Hearst, now deceased. The Past High Priest Council was also organized under Most Ex. Grand High Priest Alexander, was directed by Comp. Cleveland Williams until his untimely death, at which time Companion Johnny McCray became Council President. Under the administration of Most Ex. Grand High Priest Cleveland Mackey, the Deputies Council and

the Past High Priests Council were merged into the High Priests and Deputies Council, and Rt. Ex. Johnny McCray was elected President. Several informative and enlightening workshops have been conducted under his leadership. Other Grand Officers have held the title of President since Companion McCray. They are: Rt. Ex. Carl Finerson and Honorary Past Grand High Priest Eugene C. Johnson.

The Annual Jewel Contest, a brain child of Grand High Priest Fred Alexander, and chaired by Rt. Ex. Charles T. Maxwell, who wrote the Contest Rules and Regulations, is a ritualistic contest between Subordinate Chapters. It was first held at Cypress Gardens, Florida, in 1973, and continued under the administrations of Grand High Priests Bentley, Mackey, and Maxwell. The first Chapters to compete were: Harmony No. 105, Eustis, Florida, M.E. Cleveland J. Mackey, High Priest; A.J. Junius Chapter No. 70, Jacksonville, Florida, M.E. Charles T. Maxwell, High Priest; and Pompano Chapter No. 164, M.E. Perry Thurston, High Priest. A.J. Junius Chapter No. 70, of Jacksonville, won the first Jewel (Plaque).

### Grand Lecturer

Past High Priest, Past District Deputy, Most Worshipful Grand Master, Companion Robert Terrell, Pride of Ft. Myers Chapter No 162, served as Grand Lecturer for many years captivating all Companions who heard him on Local, State, and National levels. He served in this position under the Alexander, Bentley, Mackey, Maxwell and McCray Administrations.

### Statewide Exaltation

A great deal of emphasis was placed on Statewide Exaltations under the Most. Ex. Grand High Priest Charles T. Maxwell Administration and continued under the Johnny McCray Administration. Its purpose is to foster uniform exaltation of candidates to the seventh or Holy Royal Arch Degree, under the watchful eyes, skill and superb knowledge of Past High Priest Augustus A. Cox, Chairman, and Past High Priest Reginald Ferguson, Grand Instructor. Many Companions were added to the rosters of Subordinate Chapters across the State. In September 1996, Rt. Ex. Grand Scribe Henry B. Parker, Jr., was asked by Most Ex. Grand High Priest Johnny McCray to oversee the Statewide Exaltations.

The Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter along with The Most Worshipful Union Grand Court, Heroines of Jericho hosted the General Conference of Grand Chapters Holy Royal Arch Mason of the United States of America and the Bahamas, Inc., and the General Conference of Grand Courts, Heroines of Jericho of the United States of America and the Bahamas, Inc. in Orlando, Florida, the second year of the administration of General Grand High Priest Charles T. Maxwell, in 1995. Companion Johnny McCray had the distinction of being the Host Most Excellent Grand High Priest and the General Grand Coordinator for this Session.

The 93rd Annual Grand Convocation was held April 12-13, 1996, at East, 410 Broad Street, Jacksonville, Florida, at our Grand East. A.J. Junius Chapter No. 70 performing the occasional Grand Chapter opening ceremonies. The Annual Memorial Service was held following the reception of the Most Excellent Grand High Priest and his Special Guests. Rev. Companion Ervin Donaldson delivered the Memorial Sermon, "Satisfaction Guaranteed and Warranted". Music was rendered by his Choir from the Deep Creek Missionary Baptist Church of Lake City, Florida.



At the conclusion of a detailed accounting of his stewardship for the fiscal year, 1995-1996, the Most Ex. Grand High Priest Johnny McCray made several recommendations which were approved by the 93rd Annual Grand Convocation; among them were: the adoption of the First Official News Letter Publication, "The Signet", to be shared with other Jurisdictions. Grand Parliamentarian Rt. Ex. Walter P. Russell was appointed Chairman of this project. An annual administrative fee of ten (\$10.00) dollars was approved to be assessed each person becoming a member of the Peach State Charitable Insurance Program, effective, May 1, 1996.

The Deputy and High Priest Council Workshop, and the Semi-Annual Workshop were combined, effective, September 1997, and will hereafter be a two day workshop on Friday and Saturday.

The first dues increase in ten years, from \$28.00 to \$33.00 per member, was also approved, effective August 16, 1996. Re-instatement Fees were increased from \$55.00 to \$65.00, and New Member Joining Fees were increased from \$150.00 to \$165.00, including regalia, all became effective on the same date. Eliminated was the \$14.00 rebate to local chapters from new Member Application Fees, and was replaced with a \$10.00 rebate from said fees.

With all of the progress being made by the Grand Chapter, it became necessary, during the 99th Annual Session to realign some of our Royal Arch Districts. The following is the result of this realignment:

District No. 1	District No. 3	District No. 7	District No. 8	District No. 111
Walter J. Randall, Sr. District Deputy	Richard B. Brown District Deputy	Walter P. Russell, District Deputy	Walter Johnson, District Deputy	Willie Rogers, District Deputy
Crescent No. 50 A.J. Junius No 70 Jasper No. 49	Jonathan No. 198 Gideon No. 130	Mt. Horeb No. 94 Mt. Sinai No. 108 Providence No. 113 Carey P. Bentley No 116	Jereboam No.16 Bright Light No. 83	Royal Palm No. 121 Pompano No. 164 Christian No. 90 Deborah No. 10

As has been our custom for the past several years, we are continuing to contribute, annually, to local Charitable Organizations to sum of \$500.00 in areas where we hold our workshops and the Host District and Chapters designating the recipients.

Peach State Charitable Insurance Program

During the 1996-1997 fiscal years the Insurance Program was put on hold due to various problems that arose with the Insurance Company, the Peach State Charitable Insurance Program. Future participation in this program depended upon recommendations from the Most Excellent Grand High Priest and the Executive Board.

Zerubbabel Day Observance

Zerubbabel Day Observance was changed from the 4th Sunday of October, to the 4th Sunday of April, annually, beginning with the 4th Sunday of April, 1996, because this date is more in-keeping with research of the initial observance of Zerubbabel Day.

## Annual King's Contest

The Annual King's Contest participants has changed over the years from the Most Excellent High Priest as the contestant to the District Deputy as the Contestant, currently, we are experiencing renewed interest in this event.

## The Annual Kings and Queen Coronation and Joint Fashion Show

The Annual King and Queen Coronation and Joint Fashion Show of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter and Grand Court continue to develop into one of the most anticipated social events of our Grand Session. This event is coordinated jointly by representatives from each group. Companion Norman Hawkins has been the official representative and coordinator from the Grand Chapter for several years, and has given over-all guidance and leadership to the success of the entire affair.

## RE-MARRIAGE OF HOLY ROYAL ARCH MASONS AND THE HEROINES OF JERICHO

One of the last official acts of Past Most Worshipful Grand Master Dr. Henry Simmons, 33°, was by Official Proclamation when it was proclaimed that The Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter, Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida And Jurisdiction PHA, and the Most Worshipful Union Grand Court, Heroines of Jericho of Florida, PHA, would be re-united in marriage; and from that date forward the Heroines of Jericho would be recognized by all Appendant and Concordant Bodies of the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida, Belize, Central America Jurisdiction, PHA., as the Sisters of, or the Female Auxiliary to the Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida, PHA.

The Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida, and The Heroines of Jericho of Florida, were first united in marriage during the tenure of Most Worshipful Grand Master Dr. Rudolph Bradley, 33°, with Most Excellent Fred Alexander, Grand High Priest, and Dr. Frances Morris, Grand Most Ancient Matron. Peace and harmony exist with the present Union of marriage of the two groups, with Most Excellent Johnny McCray, 33° Grand High Priest, and Heroine Thelma Sheffield, Grand Most Ancient Matron. Now therefore, by the powers invested in the Most Worshipful Grand Master and Department Heads of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter, Holy Royal Arch Masons, and the Most Worshipful Union Grand Court, Heroines of Jericho, we do agree and declare this action to be official and do cause our signatures and the seals of each of these Grand Bodies to be affixed thereto the 16, day of April 1996 A.D., and attested to by the Grand Secretaries of each Grand Body.

A History of our Grand Chapter would not be complete without stating that the following Grand Masters of the Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge of Florida, Belize Central America, Jurisdiction, Prince Hall Affiliated, have given unflagging support in helping to foster the up-building of Royal Arch Masonry in the State of Florida. These honorable Most Worshipful Grand Masters are: Rudolph Bradley 33°, George Washington III 33°, Henry Simmons 33° Robert Terrell 33°, and David L. Wright 33°, and Rev. Dr. Michael R. Moore 33°.

The 94<sup>th</sup> Annual Grand Convocation was held April 10, 11 and 12 1997 at our Grand East, 410 Broad Street, Jacksonville, Florida, with Royal Arch District No. 1 District Deputy Walter J. Randall, Sr. and Companions performing the Occasional Grand Chapter Opening Ceremonies. The annual memorial service was held following the reception of Most Excellent Grand High Priest Johnny McCray, and his special guests. The Royal Arch

memorial service from the Red Ritual was performed by Companions Ron West, Rod Gooch, Kenneth Williams and G. Henry Williams of A.J. Junius Chapter #70 of Jacksonville. Rev. Companion Ervin Donaldson, Jasper Chapter #49 Jasper, Florida delivered the memorial sermon and music was rendered by the Deep Creek Baptist Church choir, Lake City, Florida. Following a detailed accounting of his stewardship for the year, Most Excellent Grand High Priest Johnny McCray made several recommendations which were: accepted and acted upon by the Grand Body.

That we would continue our Annual Donations to the following charities: The NAACP, Sickie Foundation, The Y.M.C.A., Boy and Girl Scouts, and the United Negro College Fund.

That Companion Kenneth Williams would be appointed to assist Deputy Walter J. Randall, Sr. of District No. 1.

That Companion James Phillips would be appointed Deputy for District No. 6, and that Deputy Oscar Hughes would become Deputy Emeritus for District No. 6.

That the Awards of "Deputy of the Year" and "High Priest of the Year" be recommended through the Deputies and High Priest Council.

That by January 1998, all records and reports of the Grand Chapter's office be completely automated.

That the Grand Chapter would continue to support Companion Richard Brown and Mrs. Arlene Hampton, Office Clerk, in their computer classes.

There were eight (8) Companions who were memorialized during the 94<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation. They were Companions James Brown, Triangle #187; Companion L. Jackson, Waymon #78; Companion Frazier Brown, Mt. Pisgah #105; Companion James Powers, Waymon #78; Companion Ezekiel Grant, Carey P. Bently #116; Companion Willie Solomon, Chaires #111; Companion Nathan Brown, Phoenix #64; and Companion Irving Brown, H.T. Williams #144.

During the 94<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation, Most Excellent Grand High Priest Johnny McCray bestowed the Honorary Past Grand High Priest of Florida Degree upon Companion Anthony K. Wells of the District of Columbia Masonic Jurisdiction, and the Honorary Past Grand King Degree upon Companion Dr. P.K. Gadegbeku, Grand King of the Masonic Jurisdiction of South Carolina. Later during the year, the Honorary Past Grand High Priest of Florida Degree was bestowed upon Companions Walter Johnson of Jereboam Chapter No.16, Ft. Pierce, Florida, and Companion Richard Brown of Mt. Pisgah Chapter No.105 of Gainesville, Florida.

The Grand Chapter continued to be concerned about the welfare of others through it's support of eleven Charitable Organizations from April, 1997, to March, 1998, in the sum of \$3,180; included in this amount is our Annual donation of \$500.00 to a charity in the District that host the Semi-Annual Workshop. The Host District and Chapters designated the recipient of the donation.

## CHARITABLE DONATIONS

Sickle Cell Foundation	\$1000.00
YMCA of Florida	\$ 500.00
General Grand Conference Charity	\$ 100.00
Morocco Shrine Charity Circus	\$ 125.00
Queen of the Nile Youth Talent	\$ 50.00
Hospice Bay Med.	\$ 500.00
Cancer Society	\$ 500.00
Tallahassee Boys Choir	\$ 125.00
Alpha Phi Alpha - U.N.C.F.	\$ 180.00
Elks Charity	\$ <u>100.00</u>
	\$3180.00

The College of Royal Arch Masonry under the dynamic leadership of its Dean, Companion Enoch Mobley and very knowledgeable and capable faculty, continued to teach and enlighten the craft during it's Semi-Annual Workshop in Ft. Walton Beach, Florida. This, the second year of the College of Royal Arch Masonry, was very successful and well attended.

Volume 2, of "The Signet", the Quarterly newsletter of the Most Ex. Union Grand Chapter, Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida, was published March 31, 1997, and featured words of wisdom for the craft. The major portion of this issue of the news letter was devoted to an overview of "The College of Royal Arch Masonry", Past High Priest Enoch T. Mobley, and President Dean.

Renewed interest continues in our Annual King's Contest, held in conjunction with the Annual Queen's Coronation and joint Fashion Show. This event continues to develop into one of the most anticipated social events of our Grand Session. The history of our 94<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation would not be complete without recognizing that the Honorable Most Worshipful Grand Master, Dr. Robert Terrell 33°, in spite of his lofty status, still serves the Most Ex. Union Grand Chapter in the capacity of Grand Lecturer; he is to be commended.

The 95<sup>th</sup> Annual Grand convocation was held April 17-18, 1998, at our Grand East, 410 Broad Street, Jacksonville, Florida, with A.J. Junius Chapter No. 70 ritualistically opening the Occasional Grand Chapter. Following the reception of the Most Excellent Grand High Priest, M.E. Johnny McCray and his guests, our devotional services, reading of the official Proclamation and appoint of committees, the Annual Memorial Service with Companion rev. John Peterson as Guest Speaker was held. Past Grand High Priest Charles t. Maxwell was in charge of the ritualistic ceremonies with each of the elected grand officers taking their respective parts.

Following a detailed accounting of his stewardship for the Fiscal years 1997-1998, Most Excellent Grand High Priest Johnny McCray made the following recommendations:

1. That the history of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter continue to be researched and written and updated by the History Committee each year during our Annual Grand Convocation. He appointed Comp Eugene C. Johnson of Chapter #168 to the Historical Committee.
2. That each Subordinate Chapter of the Most Excellent union Grand Chapter Holy "royal Arch Masons of State of Florida make a written annual report of their donation to both charity and education during the Annual Grand

Convocation, and forward a copy to the Most Excellent Grand High Priest and Grand Secretary on or before April 1<sup>st</sup> of each year.

3. That the Deputies and High Priest council Workshop be re-established effective January 1999.
4. That Carlon J. Radcliff of Pride of ft. Myers Chapter No. 162 be appointed High Priest of that Chapter, and District Deputy Grand High priest of District No. 9.
5. That Charles Lawson of Mt. Pisgah Chapter No. 105 be appointed District Deputy Grand High Priest of District No. 3 assisted by Jackie L. Armond of Mt. Pisgah Chapter No. 105.
6. That George Thomas of Zerubbabel Chapter No. 1 be appointed district Deputy Grand High Priest of District No. 1 assisted by Reginald Ferguson.
7. Recommend merging of P.E. William chapter No. 135 and Steward Chapter No. 167, in District No. 2.
8. Recommend merging of Gideon Chapter No. 130 to Mt. Pisgah Chapter No. 105 in District No. 3.
9. Recommend merging of Chaires Chapter No. 111 to Triangle Chapter No. 187, in district No. 4.
10. Recommend Merging of Rush and Gray chapter No. 197 and Buckhorn Chapter No. 194 and W.H. Shirley Chapter No. 199 to St. James Chapter No. 26 in district No. 4.
11. Recommend merging of Deborah Chapter No. 10 to Christian Chapter No. 90 in District No. 8.
12. Recommend that an Annual Grand Convocation Souvenir Book Program be Published each annual session with the Grand Scribe being Ex. Officio, with a standing committee consisting of Comp. Walter Russell, Comp. Charlon Radcliff, Comp. Charles T. Maxwell, Comp. Fred Moore, Comp. Lynwood Loper, Comp. Gregory Groffery, Comp. Enoch Mobley.
13. Recommend that the Grand chapter continue to Support and Donate to the following Charities
  - Sickle Cell Foundation
  - Negro College fund
  - Edward Waters College
  - NAACP
  - YMCA
  - Hospice Foundation
  - Cancer Society
  - Harold Gray Scholarship Fund

In continuing with the 95<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation opening, Deputy Grand High Priest Carl Finerson's Allocution was read by PGHP Charles T Maxwell, due to his absence, because of the death of his daughter. Grand King Eugene C. Johnson then read his stewardship then stated that after ten years in the line, he would not accept re-nomination. He stated it was time to bring up some new young blood, and by stepping down this would occur. MEGHP McCray praised companion Johnson for his years of devoted service to the MEUGC and bestowed upon him the title of Honorary Past Grand High Priest. Rt. Excellent Henry Parker was then elected to Grand King and Lewis Thurston was elected to Grand Scribe.

Companion Freddie Whitehead resigned from the position of Grand CCFC because of his heavy grand lodge work load. Companion Lynwood Loper was appointed to succeed him in the position of Grand CCFC.

There were 125 companions registered for the 95th Convocation our special guest was Past Most Excellent General Conference Grand High Priest Herbert Bates who stated that he was 92 years young and had been affiliated with masonry for more than 70 years. Additional guest from Washington D.C. were M.E. James Gaither, Grand High Priest, William Mc Neil DGHP, Dwight Parker G.S. Carlton Paige, G.K. and Anthony K. Wells, Past Grand High Priest.

There were a total of 18 companions Exalted during the 95<sup>th</sup> session. Companion James Lassiter Jr., 86 years old with 49 years of service and companion Edmond Wright, also 86 years old with 49 years service were exempted by the Grand Chapter. The Grim Reaper also visited the MEUGC ten (10) times during the year and removed the following Companions: John Truesdale, # 16, Dave Collins #26, Robert k Knight #26, William Wilcox #70, Oscar Hughes #114, Ralph Gissendaner, Stanley Saunders, Willie Thomas Eddie Smith and Past Most Worshipful Grand Master Robert Terrel 33, who also served faithfully as a Royal Arch Mason for over 50 Years. He also served as High Priest of Ft. Meyers #162, District Deputy Grand High Priest, and Grand Lecturer for MEUGC of Holy Royal Arch Masons He died August 31, 1998.

During the session a love offering of \$505.00 was taken up for Past Grand Most Ancient Matron Dr. Francis Morris/ who has had an extended period of illness. The Time and Place Committee recommended, and it was accepted by the body that our Semi-Annual would be held as follows; 1998 Tampa, 1999 Orlando, 2000 Miami and 2001 Jacksonville.

MEGHP McCray instituted a 120 day dispensation from 10 September 1998 to 10 January 1999 for the purpose of recruiting and exalting new companions. The MEUGC became a member of the newly activated Southern Alliance of the General Conference of Grand Chapters, U.S.A. and the Bahamas, PHA. MEGHP McCray represented Florida by paying the required \$100.00 fee.

The 2000 Occasional Session of the 96<sup>th</sup> Annual Grand Session was opened at 10:00 AM on 21 April by District #1 consisting of A.J. Junius #70 and Crescent #50 under the direction of District Deputy George Thomas. At 1020 MEGHP Johnny Mc Cray was received and he in turn brought in his special guest. The session was anchored with a Memorial Service that featured Grand Chaplain Rev Henry Ely as speaker. At 11:45 AM committees were appointed and the companions recessed for lunch to be called back on at 2:30 PM At the evening session some of the committee reports were given and some of the special guest gave words of wisdom. This continued until the afternoon session was called off in preparation for the exaltation. At 6:00 PM a statewide exaltation was held to exalt 29 new companions. This activity was conducted by PHP Augustus Cox and PHP Reginald Ferguson and administered by Grand King Henry B. Parker.

On Saturday at 9AM 22 April, the Grand session reconvened with continued committee reports. After hearing the Jewel Contest committee report, it was recommended and

approved that the Jewel Contest be continued as a part of the September (mid-year) workshop. It was also recommended and approved that the College of Royal be presented at the mid-year work shop. It was further discussed and approved that a recognition banquet for MEGHP Johnny McCray be also given at the mid-year workshop.

At 12 noon the Joint HRAM and HOJ Luncheon was held at the Radisson Hotel, where recognition was given to those Companions and Heroines who had done outstanding work through-out the. The 29 newly exalted Companions were introduced and given their Crowns. After the Luncheon the Grand Master conducted the election. All officers were elected and or reappointed and installed the session was closed at 5:00 PM so all could prepare for the joint King and Queen contest. District Deputy James L. Phillips of District 6 was crowned King.

The 2001 Grand convocation for the 98t5h Grand Session of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Masons opened on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Radisson River walk Hotel of Jacksonville Florida at 10:00 AM, upon the receipt of MEGHP Johnny Mc Cray.

The morning session was occupied with introduction of guest, assignment of committees and the memorial service which was conducted by companion Rev. John Batts, associate pastor of 2<sup>nd</sup> Missionary Baptist Church of Jacksonville. After the memorial service the session was called off until 2:30PM. The afternoon session was a continuance of committee reports and short but dynamic words of wisdom from guest speakers. There were no grievances from any chapter which indicates that the grand chapter is meeting the needs of their subordinate chapters. The session was called off at 4:30PM. At 6PM PHP Augustus Cox and PHP Reginald Ferguson conducted the statewide exaltation at the Scottish Rite Cathedral.

On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March the companions attended the Heroines of Jericho Prayer breakfast prior to reconvening at 9AM. The morning was filled with committee reports. At 12:30 the joint Holy Royal Arch and Heroines of Jericho luncheon was held. Scholarships were awarded to graduating High School student that met the established criteria. A special financial presentation was given to Edwards Watters College and the local Jacksonville Branch NAACP. The newly exalted companions were also presented their crowns.

At 2:30pm the session reconvened and concluded its' business. At 4:30pm the Grand Master conducted the election and the companions retired to prepare for the Joint Holy Royal Arch and Heroines of Jericho King and Queen Contest. The session was closed out with the joint financial re-cap meeting at 10:30 Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> March.

The 2001 Committee on the Most Excellent Grand High Priest's Stewardship and Recommendations too pleasure in congratulating Most. Ex. Grand High Priest McCray for his vision for the Grand Chapter during this New Millennium and the emphasis he is placing on our youth, as he focused on the fact that they are our most precious resources and commodities. This was reflected in his slogan: Building the Bridge In The

New Millennium, followed with the theme "Reconciling Our Future While Remembering Our Past," "Things don't Just Happen Someone Has to Make Them Happen", "Are You Leading, Following or Going Nowhere?" He challenged the Grand chapter to become concerned and involved in providing remedies for conditions as we find them in some of our communities.

The following recommendations made were adopted by the Companions:

1. That a Souvenir Journal be published at each Annual Grand Convocation
2. That the Constitution of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter be Revised and reprinted with suggested changes, by our next Grand Convocation.
3. That a free will love offering be taken up during our Luncheon Program on Friday March 23, 2001 in Support of Edward Water College.
4. That the Deputy and High Priest Council Workshop be eliminated in the month of January and be combined with our semi-Annual Workshop beginning on Friday Morning effective September 2001.
5. Recommend that the Grand Chapter enroll the Office of Grand High Priest in the Grand Lodge Life Membership Fund in the amount of \$1,000.00 effective immediately.
6. That committee on Grand Chapter History continues to update our History annually and make a report at each Annual Grand Session.
7. Continue to Support the Following Charity Organizations:
  - a. Most worshipful Union Grand Lodge Building Fund
  - b. Sickle Cell Foundation - \$500.00 for year 2001
  - c. Negro College Fund
  - d. Edward Waters College - \$1,000.00 for year 2002
  - e. NAACP
  - f. YMCA
  - g. Hospice Foundation - \$500.00 for year 2001
  - h. Cancer Society
  - i. Harold Gray Scholarship Fund

On 17 April 2002, the 99<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation was opened officially with the reception of MEGHP McCray. The roll call of elected officers was conducted by Grand Secretary Mobley. An email that was received from Companion Jonathan Joseph and Companion Lynwood Loper was read by Grand Secretary Mobley confirming that they could not be present and requested to be excused. Grand Secretary Enoch Mobley also conducted a roll call of Subordinate Chapters there were a constitutional number of chapters present.

Grand High Priest Johnny McCray introduced visiting Companion Tony Wells, General Conference Grand Scribe from Washington D.C. who gave greetings. GHP McCray mentioned that he is expecting that General Conference Grand Captain of the Host Carlton Paige to arrive along with General Conference Grand High Priest Meyers who are from South Carolina.

Grand Secretary Mobley read GHP McCray's proclamation for the 99<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation for its acceptance and approval. Deputy High Priest Carl Finerson called for a motion to accept the reading. It was motioned by Grand Scribe Thurston that the proclamation be approved and accepted as read. The motion was seconded; there was an un-readiness regarding the scheduled exaltation. The motion was carried. GHP



McCray discussed the new location for exaltation in addition to expediting the schedule of events for the 99<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation.

The Rules of the Day were read by PGHP Charles T. Maxwell who recommended regular relief breaks. It was motioned by Grand Willie Strickland and seconded by Grand Chaplain Ely and three others to accept and approve the rules as read. The motion was carried.

GHP McCray discussed the break-in at the Grand Lodge involving storage containers. He mentioned that police are investigating the scene. He discussed off-loading the contents into another container.

Grand Treasurer Cobb reported on the Grand Chapters finances. He distributed the Treasurer; gave summary and entertained questions. The report was received and accepted by unanimous vote. Grand secretary Mobley gave a summary of the Secretary's finance report. He had previously distributed copies. After all questions were answered, there was a motion and second which was accepted by all the companions.

A copy of the proposed budget for 2002/2003 was distributed and discussed in depth. MEGHP Mc Cray reminded the companions of Companion Eric Myers candidacy for Imperial Outer Guard for the Ancient Egyptian Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. MEGHP Mc Cray also discussed General Conference dates, and the Centennial Souvenir Journal. He also discussed the location of the office and operational equipment while the temple was being renovated which is scheduled to start September 2002. An in-depth discussion was held in reference to the exaltation hole being included in the renovation of the temple. The correspondence was read by the Grand Scribe regarding meeting facilities for the Semi-annual Workshop scheduled for September 12-14, 2002 in Orlando, Florida at the Rosen Plaza Hotel.

The MEGHP stated that the statewide observance of Zerrubbabel Day is April 28, 2002 and there are to be no other meetings during that time. He urged everyone to invite the whole Masonic family to attend and to be sure to include the Heroines of Jericho on the program. The General Grand Conference will be in either Daytona Beach or Tampa, Florida in 2005. The Knights Templar will make the selection of the location which could possibly be Jacksonville, Florida. MEGHP Mc Cray announced that all king contestants need to see the Grand King. He then reminded the companions of memorial service in the morning. He also stated that the web site was functional and ready for use.

Most Worshipful Grand Master David L. Wright brought remarks and discussed web site usage information and automating Grand Lodge information systems. He discussed Palm Sunday Services for Heroines of Jericho and the desire to see more Royal Arch Masons in attendance. Grand Master Wright closed his remarks stressing the importance of being an active Master Mason in the community and the importance of voting. MEGHP Mc Cray called off the morning session for lunch at 12:30.

The afternoon session reconvened with MEGHP giving an inspiring allocution with the

following recommendations:

1. That the Immediate Cabinet be empowered to take, within time, the necessary action to complete the HRAM section, after the renovation of the Masonic Temple, to include the office space given to the Grand Chapter by the Grand Master and Board of Trustees of the Grand Lodge.
2. That the Host Excellent Grand Chapter will make an annual donation to the Charity of its choice.
3. That each Subordinate Chapter would establish a working Membership Committee whose responsibility and specific duties would be to:
  - A. Reclaim and maintain the membership of the Local Chapter.
  - B. To discourage the practice of suspending members for non-payment of dues.
4. That the fines and penalties , as sated in our New Constitution with regards , to late incomplete Annual Reports , be strictly enforced.
5. That the Grand Chapter and the Education Committee will be responsible for spearheading a 100<sup>th</sup> year Jubilee Souvenir Journal for 2003 Grand Convocation.
6. That the Grand Secretary, with- the aid and assistance of the office Clerk, will compile a list of all Companions suspended of non-payment of dues assessment and that this list be forwarded to the Knight Templars and Shiners and that a copy be sent to the Grand Masters.
7. Finally, he bestowed accolades upon Honorable David L. Wright, 33 our Most Worshipful Grand Master, for his words of advice, counsel, encouragement, and overall support of Royal Arch Masonry and its programs throughout the state of Florida and the United States through his support of the General Grand Conference of Grand Chapters of Royal Arch Masonry of the United states and the Bahamas.

In Summary all six of the recommendations, were accepted and voted on separately for action by the Grand Body.

On April 18 2003 the 100<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation was held in Jacksonville Florida. The session was officially opened upon receipt of MEGHP Mc Cray. Roll Call of Grand Lodge officers, District deputies and Subordinates chapters in accordance with the constitution was done by the grand secretary. There was sufficient representation to officially open the session.

MEGHP Mc Cray introduced his guest then directed the secretary to begin to assign committees. After receiving some of the reports and then having some of his guest bring greetings, Deputy Grand High Priest Finerson then presided over the craft, receiving some committee reports, then prepared the craft for MEGHP Mc Cray's allocution. He then presented MEGHP Mc Cray who firstly stated that he would be stepping down after this session and that he would be nominating DGHP Finerson for the position of Most Excellent Grand High Priest

After the allocution was received and the recommendations were acted upon separately by the body, MEGHP Finerson passed the gavel to MEGHP Mc Cray who dismissed the craft for ten minutes with instructions to reassemble for the joint memorial ceremony. After the ceremony the companions joined the Heroines for the joint luncheon.

After the luncheon the companions reconvened to hear and act on the other committee reports. The Secretary and Financial reports which had been passed earlier were presented and all question cleared and the reports were accepted. All business being concluded Grand Master David Wright commenced to conduct the election. When the nomination for MEGHP was called, MEGHP Johnny Mc Cray immediately nominated DGHP Carl Finerson. The nomination was closed on the said one name and companion Finerson was elected by one unanimous ballot to the office of Most Excellent Grand High Priest for the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Masons for Florida and it's jurisdictions. Also elected as his immediate cabinet were Rt. Ex. Deputy Grand High Priest Henry Parker, Rt. Ex. Grand King Lewis Thurston, Rt. Ex. Grand Scribe Enoch Mobley, Rt. Ex. Grand Treasurer Albert Cobb, Rt. Ex. Grand Secretary Earnest B. Daniels, and Rev. Henry Ely Rt. Ex. Grand Chaplain. Most Ex. Grand High Priest Finerson's speech to the companions was filed with his gratitude for their selecting him to serve as their leader. He further stated that he would continue in the same high performing method that Past Most Ex. Grand High Priest McCray had established.

In April 2004, Most Ex. Grand High Priest Finerson presided over his first Convocation after serving for one year. He gave 6 recommendations which were voted on and accepted by the Companions.

1. That the Grand Chapter elections be held annually, and the Most Ex. Grand High Priest not serve no more than four (4) consecutive years, commencing April 2004.
2. That the death certificate be discontinued as a source document for paying claims.
3. That the Grande Chapter secures its own website.
4. That the Grand Chapter invests in the Millennia Enterprise Program.
5. That the Grand Chapter establishes an annual joint cabinet meeting with the Heroines of Jericho.
6. That the Jewel Contest be revitalized.

In January 2005, Most Ex. Grand High Priest Finerson and Most Ancient Grand Worthy Matron Patricia Stafford begin the year with a joint Holy Royal Arch and Heroines of Jericho planning workshop during a three day cruise. The program was successful in building a positive working relationship. In April 2005 the 102<sup>nd</sup> Grand Convocation was held and Most Ex. Grand High Priest Finerson directed his Research Committee to research the possibility of changing Zerubbabel day celebration from its present date in April to its original date in October if possible. He also tasked the Historical Committee to update the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter History and verify the correct Convocation dates. He appraised the Companions of the upcoming General Grand

Conference of Holy Royal Arch Masons Convocation to be held in Orlando. Rt. Ex. Grand Scribe Enoch Mobley briefed the Companions on the particulars and the role that Florida was playing in this event. In late 2005 the Most Ex. Union Grand Chapter moved back to the newly renovated Masonic Temple at 410 N. Broad Street in Jacksonville, Florida after approximately four (4) years of renovation. During the renovation, the Florida Council of Deliberation Cathedral on 6<sup>th</sup> Street was the temporary home for Most Ex. Union Grand Chapter.

In April 2005 the 102<sup>nd</sup> Grand Convocation was held in Jacksonville and Most Excellent Grand High Priest Carl Finerson in his allocution made the 5 following recommendations that were voted on and adopted by the Companions:

1. Head tax increase by \$10.00 from \$33.00 to \$43.00
2. Establish a mentorship program
3. Purchase new office equipment for the newly renovated Grand Chapter Office.
4. Reestablish the Jewel Contest
5. Establish a dispensation through August 2005 that allow new members to join for \$50.00 and Reinstate for \$25.00.

In July of 2005, Orlando, Florida was the host city for the General Grand Conference of Holy Royal Arch Masonry. At this session Past Grand High Priest Johnny McCray was elected General Conference Grand High Priest.

In January 2006 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Most Excellent Grand Chapter and Heroines of Jericho cabinet held its 2<sup>nd</sup> joint 3-Day cruise/workshop. Approximately 60 Companions and Heroines attended.

Since his election to MEGHP in 2003, Most Ex. Grand High Priest Finerson has utilized his management skills to exalt Royal Arch Masonry to a new level. Following is a list of some of these accomplishments:

Inherited a \$7,000.00 debt, and successfully brought the Grand Chapter back into financial sovereignty in 7 months.

GHP Finerson cleared up all debts to subordinate chapters, ensuring that all crowns, aprons, books and patents owed to chapters were issued to them.

Revamped the administrative process of the Grand Chapter, whereas the grand officers fully participate in the running of the Grand Chapter and take full responsibilities of the duties of which they were elected to perform.

He restored the powers of the Excellent High Priest and subordinate chapters, permitted them to conduct their own exaltations and consecrations of crowns.

Restored the powers of the District Deputy Grand High Priest, permitted him to authorize and approve of district programs within his district.

Dispense the necessity of presenting a death certificate upon death of a companion in order for the beneficiary to receive the companions RBA benefits. The only requirement is the notification from the subordinate chapter.

Established four year tenure; whereas the elected most Excellent Grand High Priest could not serve no more than four consecutive years, which was voted on and approved by the Grand Body, and subsequently affixed in the Grand Chapter constitution and by-Laws.

GHP Finerson revised the Grand Convocation and Semi-Annual Workshop whereas both sessions will be able to complete all business in two days, respectively.

Executed the creator and originator of the three in one program, where as a Master Mason was able to receive all three York Rite Degrees at once, at a significant reduced price. Upon approval by HRAM, the Royal & Select masters and Knights of Templar to gain their approval. Under this program we were able to increase our membership by a hundred plus.

He established reinstatement policy whereas a previous companion could reinstate back in to the order at minimum fee of \$25.00, with no back penalties.

Refurbished the Grand Chapter Office with new furniture and updated electronic equipment

Created a mentor program whereas each subordinate chapter will be required to adopt an underprivileged child and mentor the individual through high school.

And he established subordinate chapters in the Virgin Island and Ft. Myers.

The 104<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation  
26-28 April 2006

The 104<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation held on April 26, 27, & 28, 2006 in Jacksonville was a very exciting and historical occasion. To begin with, we moved back home to 410 Broad Street after a 6 year absence due to renovation.

Most Ex. Grand High Priest Carl Finerson kicked off with an inspiring Executive Board meeting that set the pace throughout. The following seven items of discussion were agreed upon and later adopted as recommendations from his allocution. They are as follows:

1. Administrative hand book for Holy Royal Arch Masons. A draft will be ready for the September Workshop and the final draft April 2007.
2. Masonic Hurricane relief Fund to support the Masonic members of its jurisdiction.
3. Youth mentor program, whereas each subordinate chapter will be required to adopt an under-privileged youth and mentor the individual through High School.
4. Joint workshop with the HOJ at our Semi-Annual Workshop.
5. Grand Chapter Recorder will notify the York Rite bodies and AEAONMS of the jurisdiction of Florida when a companion has been dropped for non payment of dues.
6. All elected High Priest, King and Scribe of Subordinate Chapters, and all elected and Appointed Grand Officers residing in the district in which the Grand High Priest is making his official visitation must be in attendance.
7. Deputy Grand High Priest, Grand King and Grand Scribe will each visit at least five different chapters other than their own during the next twelve months.

Another historical issue was concluded. After considerable research by the committee consisting of HPGHP Johnson, PGHP Maxwell, PGHP McCray and Grand Secretary Daniels, it was determined that this was the 104<sup>th</sup> and not the 103<sup>rd</sup> session. The committee established that the MEUGC was actually 109 years old. No sessions were held in the following years: 1901, 1903, 1905, 1907, 1933 and 1936 of which one year was duplicated. After hearing the Historical Report, it was moved and seconded by the entire body to immediately change the 2006 Grand Convocation to number 104 and that the 2007 Grand Convocation next year will be number 105 and so forth. The motion carried overwhelmingly. For his pursuit in seeking the correct alignment of the convocations with the correct year, MEGHP Finerson appointed PGHP Eugene C, Johnson as the Chairman of the Historical Committee for the MEUGC HRAM of Florida.

Another note worthy date was researched and concluded that Zerubbabel Day celebration should be in October rather than April, as was once celebrated. Therefore the entire MEUGC will commence to celebrate Zerubbabel Day on the Fourth Sunday in October 2007. This was adopted by the Grand Body. On May 5, 6, 7 2006, Most Excellent Grand High Priest Finerson and Most Ancient Grand Matron Stafford and their immediate cabinet journeyed to the Virgin Island and established a new Chapter of HRAM and a new Court of HOJ. The adventure was one of monumental success and growth for the MEUGC and MWUGL. The new court was named Stafford-Hall Court

#205 and the chapter was named Christopher Johnson Chapter #1A.

The 105<sup>th</sup> Convocation  
4 April 2007

The 105<sup>th</sup> Convocation began 4 April 2007 with an informative Executive Board meeting that laid the groundwork for the acceptance and adoption by the body of the following:

1. Preparation and publishing of an Administrative Handbook for HRAM.
2. Establishing a Youth Mentoring Program by every subordinate chapter where in each district will report progress to the MEGHP.
3. Establishing a Disaster Committee to assist HRAM. Companions
4. Collaborating with York Rite bodies to establish a 2 ½ days workshop.
5. Continuing Special Dispensations for \$70.00 to join and \$25.00 for reinstatement.
6. District Deputies submit their nominees for Excellent High Priest of the Year to the MEGHP Finerson.
7. All elected High Priest, King, and Scribe of subordinate chapters and all elected and appointed grand officers residing in the district which the MEGHP is visiting, must be in attendance.
8. Putting the "Holy" back in Royal Arch Masonry – No dances or balls; increased church visits of 6 per year with greater Financial Contributions at collections.
9. Zerubbabel Day Celebration will be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in September.

Visitors at the Grand Convocation consisted of MEGHP James Ferguson and Comp. Pratt of the Bahamas Island. The delegation presented MEGHP Finerson with the country's flag which is to be displayed along side of the American Flag when the Grand Session is in progress. Also in attendance were PGCGHP Charles T. Maxwell, GCGHP Johnny McCray as well as MWUGL Grand Master Rev. Dr. Michael R. Moore, DGM Carter, SGW Stafford, JGW Gulley as well as department heads.

Committee Reports:

1. Administrative Handbook Committee will meet in Melbourne on 12 May with a report to be given at the September 2007 Semi-Annual Workshop
2. Semi-Annual Workshop will be held 13-16 September 2007 in Melbourne with MEGHP Finerson testimonial held on Saturday night. There will be no 2008 workshop because of the joint York Rite workshop in Jan 2009 at Jacksonville.
3. There were 29 chapters registered, 22 present
4. Newly established Disaster Committee will turn in all reports and recommendations to the cabinet. More info to come in the September workshop.
5. Exaltation: 13 Brothers were exalted.
6. Historical Committee: The overall report was 85 percent completed, 2000, 2001, 2002. Information was extracted from PGHP McCray files and is ready to be inserted in the overall history. The committee also requested DDGHP Christopher Johnson secure a compiled synopsis of Bahamian History and submit at the 2008 session.



7. Upon hearing the report, MEGHP Finerson requested that each subordinate chapter compile their local history and turn in to the History Committee at the 2008 Grand Session.
8. Jurisprudence Committee reminded the body that only one companion from each subordinate chapter can be submitted per year to the Grand Chapter for consideration for exemption. No request received.
9. There were no grievances this year.
10. King Contest was won by EHP Marquis Jasmine of Tallahassee. He raised \$1,500.00.
11. Committee on Charters and Dispensations: We the committee found that:
  - 1) Royal Palm Chapter #21, is without a Charter. Research was done to locate the original one however, to no avail. Therefore, the Most Excellent Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Mason of Florida, and its Jurisdictions, has issued them a replacement on April 5, 2007, reflection the current officers names on it.,
  - 2) We have a letter fro J.E. Johnson Chapter #118, dated December 23, 2006, requesting that the Chapter be allowed to change its name to Augustus W. Franklin #118. We were advised by Grand Secretary Dargan that the EHP of this chapter was to send the officers names, they did that via e-mail. Therefore, we the committee find that because all qualifications were met, we recommend this name change.
12. The committee on Constitution and By-Laws reported no known amendments to our existing Constitution and By-Laws, however, this could possibly change.

Clarification: Article IX, Section 4:

- The Most Worshipful Union Grand Master, the most Excellent Grand High Priest, Past Grand Masters, Past Grand High Priest, Honorary Past Grand High Priests, and active sitting Department Heads are exempted from all dues, assessments, and registrations.

Dress:

- The current Grand Chapter Constitution and By-Laws does not address what our dress is. The body adopted the red tie as part of the dress. Need direction from the Grand Chapter whether or not to amend the Constitution and By-Laws to address our dress.

Uniform By-Laws for Subordinate Chapters:

- Received Mt. Horeb #94 and Carey P. Bentley #116 Uniform By-Laws for Grand Chapter's review and approval.
- Several Chapters have yet to send in their completed by-laws to the Grand Chapter for approval.
- Recommended amending Article VI, Section 2, of the Uniform By-Laws for Subordinate Chapters to change from the black tie to the red tie as part of the regular dress.

13. The necrology committee reported that 6 companions had passed.

14. All Grand Officers were re-elected and those appointed were installed by M.W. Grand Master Michael R. Moore. The session was closed with a prayer by the Grand Chaplain.

## The MEUGC 106<sup>TH</sup> Grand Session 2008

The 106<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the MEUGC of Florida was called to order at the 5:00 pm Executive Board meeting at the Wyndham Jacksonville Riverside Hotel on 14 April 2008. Official guest for the entire session were General Conference GHP Anthony Wells and Grand Master Charles Tyner of California who is also a Past Grand High Priest.

At the Executive Board Meeting, MEGHP Finerson introduced ten items for discussion that were a part of his allocution recommendation. All ten were thoroughly discussed and adopted by the entire Body. They are as follows:

1. The Grand Chapter Administrative Hand Book for Holy Royal Arch Masons be published and printed by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009, and go on sale at the 2009 York Rite Workshop.
2. The Grand Chapter Benevolent Fund Committee include members from all geographic areas, North, South, East, West and Central Florida. All committee members must be Past High Priest.
3. The Grand Chapter continues with its Youth Mentorship Program.
4. The Grand Chapter sponsors a Souvenir Journal for its 2009 Grand Convocation, and supported by all Subordinate Chapters, and elected and appointed Grand Officers
5. All Elected High Priest, King, Scribe, Treasurer and Secretary of Subordinate Chapters and all Elected and Appointed Grand Officers residing in the district in which the Grand High Priest is making his official visitation will be in attendance.
6. The Grand High Priest dismissed with the term Honorary from all Past Grand High Priest that presently carries the title, and all future degrees with PGHP being bestowed. Past seated MEGHP will be known as PMEGHP.
7. The dispensation of \$25.00 for reinstatement and \$65.00 joining fees remaining in affect for another year.
8. The Grand High Priest visitation is conducted by zones instead of districts effective 2010.
9. The Exaltation fees include Apron and Crowns as well as Patent and Rituals, and presented to the Companion at Exaltation.
10. The original concept of the College of HRAM be reinstated with the curriculum for obtaining AS and BS in HRAM.

The Grand High Priest also stated that he was spearheading and all out attempt to put the Holy back into Royal Arch Masonry (NO BALLS OR DANCES) He further declared that Zerrubbabel Day Celebration would be 28 September 2008.

Grand High Priest Finerson also declared that the official dress for opening of the Grand Convocation hence-forth will be BLACK TAILS WITH RED STRING OR BOW TIE. The Constitution will be changed to reflect the new ruling.

The Session moved to Historic Masonic Temple at 410 Broad Street on 15 April with a soul stirring Memorial Service with the official opening following and with all Grand officer dressed in Black Tuxedo's and Red Bow Ties. During the course of the session the following occurred:

1. The official dress for MEUGC Annual Grand Session opening became Black Tails with Red Bow or string tie, along with appropriate apron, collar and crown. This was adopted by all companions present and the change will be made to the constitution.
2. The time and place committed reported that the 2009 Grand Session would be held 4 through 6 April 2009, and the workshop would be held in conjunction with the Black houses work shop in Jan Of 2009 in Jacksonville.
3. The Education Committee reported that the L. Harold Gray Student award would be given at the General Grand Conference in Massachusetts on 27 Jun 2009 and all applications must be in by 15 June 2008.
4. The Benevolent Committee reported that there are now 50 participating members. They recommended that membership joining fee be increased to \$15.00 effective 2010, and the name be changed to MEUGC Benevolent Hardship fund. The report was received, but the MEGHP will make input to the recommendation at a later date.
5. The Committee on Correspondence reported that they sent six pieces of correspondence and received ten pieces.
6. The Necrology committee reported that we had lost seven Companions in the last twelve months.
7. MEGHP Finerson introduced to the companions the idea of establishing a new committee named "Emergency Relief". Each Chapter would pay \$50.00 to join which would cover all members of the chapter. The committee would respond to victims of emergencies such as hurricanes, storms, floods tornados etc. This idea still has some more work to be done on it before it become operational.
8. The Jewel Contest was won by St James Chapter of Tallahassee. There was no one to challenge them.
9. EHP Willie Parlor of Phillips Chapter 168 was the winner of the MEUGC King Contest. EHP Parlor then journeyed to the General Grand Conference to Represent Florida in the King Contest. He was successful again in winning. This is the first time Florida has won the General Grand Conference King Contest in over ten years.
10. The Jurisprudence Committee reported that PHP Erwin Donaldson was reinstated at the 2006 workshop in Orlando and had been assigned to Mt Pisgah Chapter nr 105 by MEGHP Finerson because of his geographic location. The EHP of chapter 105 was advised of the action taken and why it was taken. The committee also reported that Phoenix Chapter 64 requested exemption for PHP Charles Jones. The letter was not clear; therefore the request was not honored and will stand in abeyance until more clarifying information is received.
11. Upon receiving all reports and the secretary desk being clear, MEGHP Finerson gave his allocution along with recommendations. [the recommendations were the items discussed at the Executive Board Meeting] The Allocution was

overwhelmingly received and all recommendations were received, acted upon and adopted by the entire body, and a standing round of applause given MEGHP Finerson.

12. At this point MWGM Moore, who was in attendance, took control of the gavel and commenced to hold the election. The entire cabinet along with the total membership stood and voted unanimously to keep MEGHP Finerson in office an additional year, regardless of the ruling so stated in the Constitution. Therefore Grand Master Moore obeyed the wishes of the body and carried out the election with MEGHP Finerson being reelected. All elected officer and appointed officers were re-elected and or re- appointed as well as installed by Grand Master Michael R. Moore.

At 4:30 P.M. the 106<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation was closed with a prayer and the companions all departed in harmony.

The following activities occurred after the close of MEUGC 106<sup>th</sup> Grand Session:

1. The First combined York Rite Workshop was held in Jacksonville On 8 – 10 January 2009. It was a tremendous success. The Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter exalted fifty Companions during the workshop. Presentations were conducted by all the Elected Line Grand Officers, as well as the Secretary, Recorder and Grand Instructor.
2. On February 28, 2009, MEGHP Finerson, DGHP Parker, Grand Scribe Mobley and Grand Secretary Dargan visited Christopher Johnson Chapter 1A of St John Virgin Island. After three years operation under UD status, the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter presented the chapter with their Official Patent as a subordinate chapter of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter.

## The MEUGC 107<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation 2009

The 107<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation of the MEUGC of HRAM of Florida was called to order at the 6pm Executive Board meeting at the Wyndham Hotel in Jacksonville on 1 April 2009. There was no official guest from other jurisdictions. After the roll call of officers and chapters and other administrative procedures, MEGHP Finerson introduced ten items for discussion that were a part of his allocution recommendations. All ten items were thoroughly discussed and adopted by the entire body. They are as follows:

That the Grand Chapter Benevolent Fund Committee consists of all Past Grand High Priest.

That the Grand Chapter continues with its Youth Mentorship Program.

That Zone Visitations for the MEGHP be established, using the MWUGL already established concept, and the DGHP, GK, and GS are the Zone Coordinators.

That the Exaltation fees include aprons, crowns, patterns and rituals, to be presented to the Companions upon exaltation.

That the original concept of the College of HRAM be reinstated with the curriculum for obtaining an AS or BS degree in HRAM.

That Zerrubbabel Day observance for 2009 will be on September 27.

That the MEUGC aid the Central Florida Pharmacy Council youth program by purchasing 25 books.

That effective immediately the Past High Priest degree Fund will go to the MEGHP.

That each elected and appointed officer support the Wall of Honor which will stand as a testimony to the Historical perspective and Vision of HRAM in Florida.

That the MEUGC will pursue its 501c(3) now that it has received its incorporation status.

The Session moved to the Historic Masonic Temple at 410 Broad Street on 2 April with a soul stirring Memorial Service with PGHP Eugene C. Johnson as Worship Leader.

The Occasional opening was conducted with all Grand Officers dressed in Black Tails and Red Bow Ties observing. During the course of the one day session the following occurred:

Roll call of absent chapters and officers from the Executive Board was conducted. It was noted that 21 chapters were present which was sufficient for a quorum to open. The Rules of the Day were read by PMEGHP Charles T. Maxwell and the Executive Board minutes were read by Grand Recorder Walter Russell. They were unanimously received by the entire body. MEGHP Finerson then apologized to those companions whose ads were left out of the souvenir journal, especially PMEGHP Maxwell and PMEGHP Mc Cray because their photos were left off the ads. He also explained the significance of the Wall of Honor that he had established on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and its historical purpose. He then appealed to the companions to make a donation to a worthy cause that he would explain afterwards. At the conclusion he explained that the funds would be split between Rev. Parker, the Chaplain and Assistant Secretary, companion William Mennis Jr.

MEGHP Finerson then called for the Committee reports. The Historical report chaired by PGHP Eugene C Johnson was the first report. It was read to the body and accepted.

This report was turned over to the Secretary who will keep a copy on file, add it to the existing History, then transmit a copy to the Web Master for all companions to have access to it. The Audit Committee report found no discrepancies. There were no Resolutions received. The Time and Place committee reported that the Workshop will be held on January 7 and 8 of 2010 at the Jacksonville Crown Plaza and the 108<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation will be held April 19 and 20<sup>th</sup> at the Wyndham Hotel Jacksonville.

At 11:30AM MEGHP Finerson acknowledged all the department heads and allowed each to bring greetings. He then gave his farewell Allocution after serving six years as the Most Excellent Grand High Priest of the Most Excellence Union Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Masons for Florida and its Jurisdictions. Said allocution was received by the entire body and the nine recommendations were also received but approved separately. The nine recommendations were as follows:

1. That the Grand Chapter Benevolent Fund Committee become a committee under the responsibility of the PMEGHP and the PGHP.
2. That the Grand Chapter continues with its Youth Mentorship Program.
3. That the Grand Chapter dismiss the term "Honorary" from all Past Grand High priest and acceptance of the term PMEGHP as it relate to those whom have passed the seat. Request this be constitutional. (THERE WAS ONE OBJECTION)
4. That the MEUGC Constitution and By-Laws be updated and corrected to include that the financial requirements for all future PGHP, specify that those who are recommended and appointed by the MEGHP, must be responsible for their own dues and assessments, unless exempted and paid for by their Subordinate Chapter. If exempted by their local chapter, the chapter will assume responsibility for their Grand Chapter assessments.
5. That the desk top computer purchased by the Grand Chapter to replace the MEGHP personal computer, that was primary used for the transaction of Grand Chapter business, become the property of PMEGHP Finerson.
6. That PMEGHP Carl Finerson is allowed to purchase the Grand Chapter Lap Top that has been in his possession for the last four years at depreciation cost.
7. That the original concept of the College of HRAM be reinstated with a curriculum that will allow for obtaining an AS and BS degree in HRAM.
8. That the Wall of Honor continue to be an ongoing recognition project and a fund raiser for the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter
9. That the MEUGC continue to pursue its 501c(3) exemption status now that it is incorporated.

After receiving and disposing of the allocution, the body went to the Wyndham Hotel for a joint luncheon with the Heroines of Jericho. The luncheon was filled with many presentations and accolades for MEGHP Finerson and Worth Joshua (Bishop) Lorenzo

Hall who was stepping down. After returning to the Temple the remaining committees continued to report as follows;

The CCFC reported that 6 communications had been sent out and 9 had been received. The Benevolence Committee reported that they had a total of 64 that were participating and they had a balance of \$8,053.53 Past Grand Sec Earnest Daniels thanked the Grand Chapter for the assistance he received after the untimely death of his grandson. Rev Parker, {Grand Chaplain} thanked the body for the generous donation he received. The Grievance Committee stated that none were received.

At this time the Grand Most Ancient Matron, (Her) Patricia Stafford and her court visited the companions to make a presentation to MEGHP Finerson. After the receipt of the presentation, MEGHP Finerson went over to the Heroines to hold their election. Mean while the committee reports continued under DGHP Parker. The Administrative Handbook committee reported that the handbook was in the bookstore for sale and that the document was ongoing and the committee welcomed any new subjects and procedures. The Constitutional and By Laws committee reported that H.T. Williams By Laws were under review and the results would be forwarded upon completion of the review. The High Priesthood committee reported that they had 13 candidates for the degree to be given at the upcoming workshop. The King Contest committee reported that EHP Willie Parlor of Phillips chapter 168 of Melbourne Florida won the contest again for the second consecutive year, and the Grand Chapter would be assisting his travel to the General Grand Conference in Arlington Texas where he will compete again. {He also won that title last year} Total raised by the King contest was \$2,399.00. The Jewel Contest committee reported that their next contest will be at the upcoming workshop. The Registration committee reported that 28 chapters registered to include 128 total registrations. The Scholarship committee received no applications. They asked each local chapter to create a local scholarship.

The College of Royal Arch committee is requesting the Grand Council to resurrect and restructure the entire program.

The Charter committee reported that one charter was issued to Christopher Johnson Chapter 1A of St. Johns Island. The Necrology committee reported that 7 companions had passed. The Deputy and High Priest committee requested that the Deputy and High Priest council be studied and reconfigured.

After the last committee report was given, Senior Grand Warden Walter Gulley Jr, acting in the capacity of the Grand Master, was presented the gavel to hold the election. He stated that Grand Master Carter held MEGHP Finerson in high esteem and that he would honor PMEGHP Finerson by letting him hold the election for the MEUGC. SGW Gulley then returned the gavel to PMEGHP Finerson after he had declared all seats vacant.

PMEGHP Finerson accepted the gavel and made one statement," He had only one regret and that was that he was unable to have obtained a female body to be detached



to the MEUGC". He then asked Grand Chaplain Parker for the blessing of Deity before he commenced to hold the election. The election was a very touching and heartfelt experience. Newly elected MEGHP Henry Parker in his acceptance speech gave a most humbling recognition to PGHP Eugene C. Johnson, for the unselfish action he took that allowed him to become the Most Excellent Grand High Priest. The following Grand Officers were elected by nomination in a Ritualistic and Constitutional procedure so deemed by the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter with PMEGHP Carl Finerson presiding. After the installation of his cabinet, MEGHP Henry B. Parker was installed by PMEGHP Finerson in an open community session with his wife and mother present. The immediate cabinet is as follows:

Henry B. Parker	MEGHP
Lewis Thurston	DGHP
Enoch Mobley	Grand King
Walter P. Russell	Grand Scribe
Elton L. Lewis	Grand Secretary
Arthur E. Thompson	Grand Treasurer
Rev Elvin J. Parker	Grand Chaplain

Following the installation by PMEGHP Finerson, Newly elected MEGHP Parker directed the entire body to circle the auditorium, had prayer and sang, "Reach Out and Touch," while holding hands then departed. This was the closing of the 107<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation of the Most Excellent Union Grand Chapter of Holy Royal Arch Masons of Florida.

On April 25<sup>th</sup> 2009, newly elected MEGHP Henry B Parker called a planning meeting with his immediate cabinet. The objective was to share his vision, strategize, and create long and short range goals for the Grand Chapter. The Vision and Goals will be laid out with time lines at the 108<sup>th</sup> Grand Session in April of 2010.

## The MEUGC 108<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation 2010

The 108<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation of the MEUGC of Florida was called to order at the 5PM Executive Board meeting at the Wyndham Jacksonville Riverside Hotel on Tuesday April 20<sup>th</sup> 2010. By MEGHP Henry B. Parker. There was no official guest from other jurisdictions in attendance. MEGHP Parker thanked the Companions for such an overwhelming turnout to the 108<sup>th</sup> Grand Session. He also commended the Companions for their Charity work, and instructed them on what to do with the shoes they had brought for the homeless. He stated that his objective was to do things decently and in order, and at all times donate to worthy charity causes. He instructed the companions to purchase and bring Ensure, for donation at the next Grand Convocation in 2011.

He also called attention to the Wall of Honor, asking each Deputy to check out the wall and take action accordingly. He also stated to the Companions that the MEUGC does not have the necessary youthful numbers to insure all the MEUGC members; He said that he was hoping that the MWUGL and the MEUGC can jointly work out a plan. On that same evening, at the King and Queen Contest, PHP Willie Parlor of Phillips Chapter #168 won the King contest for the 3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive time and will travel to the General Grand Conference to represent Florida. Heroine Lira Latimer of Nick Court #64 of Tallahassee Florida won the Queen contest.

On Wednesday morning 21 April at 6AM, 50 candidates assembled at the Grand East to receive their Royal Arch degree under the guidance of PHP Ronnie Askew and his degree team. Grand Master Anthony T. Stafford's son was one of the newly exalted companions. At 8AM a soul stirring Joint Memorial Service was conducted at the hotel, with Companion Rev Dr. Elvin J. Parker bringing the message. MEGHP Parker and MAGM Stafford honored the departed with a candle light ceremony. Before closing the program MEGHP Parker presented the donated shoes to the Director of the Jax Homeless Shelter. At the end of the Memorial service everyone returned to the Masonic Temple.

At 9:30 AM, James L Phillips Chapter #168 of Melbourne Florida, with EHP Cecil Carter, opened the Occasional Chapter, which received DGHP Thurston who in turned received MEGHP Henry B. Parker and his cabinet. MEGHP Parker then received MEGHP Tyrone Peterson and PMEGHP Leslie Dean both from the Bahamas Jurisdiction.

At 10:30 AM the 108<sup>th</sup> grand convocation was officially opened with MEGHP Parker giving his official greetings, then directing the Secretary to call the rolls of Chapters to ascertain having a quorum. The response was positive and MEGHP Parker directed PMEGHP Charles T. Maxwell to read the Rules of the Day. Afterwards, MEGHP Parker gave his Allocution, then the receiving of the Committee Reports commenced.

Jurisprudence/Charter and Dispensations had two requests to change Charter names. Phillips Chapter #168 of Melbourne Florida requested to change its name to Carl

Finerson chapter #168 and Christopher Johnson Chapter 1A of the Virgin Islands requested to change their name to ZAOB #1A. Both request were granted by MEGHP Parker and will be acted upon in accordance with procedures after the Grand Convocation.

The Grand CCFC reported 4 pieces of correspondence was sent out and 5 pieces received. The Committee on Necrology given By Rev Giles stated that 5 Companions had departed. Rev Giles at this time addressed the Body and said he was leaving the state of Florida on this very date, and would be demitting because of Family matters that needed his attention in California. PMEGHP Finerson requested permission to ask the body for a love offering. Grand Chaplin Elvin Parker blessed the offering and prayed for safe deliverance of Rev. Giles and family to their new destination.

The Historical report was given by PGHP Eugene C. Johnson and the Historical Committee. It was read to the body and accepted with one correction, and that was to add Rev Companion Elvin J. Parkers name to the Cabinet as Grand Chaplain. The Resolutions and Grievances Committee received no grievances or resolutions. The King Contest Committee reported that the net profit was \$2,628.00 and that PEHP Willie Parlor of (newly named) Carl Finerson Chapter #168 of Melbourne Florida, had won the crown for the third consecutive year.

The Time and Place committee reported that the Work shop will be held on 8 and 9 January 2011 in Jacksonville, in conjunction with Royal and Select and Knights Templar. The 109<sup>th</sup> Grand Session will be held 18 and 19 April in Jacksonville Florida at 410 Broad Street. Note: MEGHP Parker commented that he would like to see the 2012 session held in the Virgin Islands if it is cost effective.

The Past Grand High Priest Council Committee reported that 31 EHP received their Priest Hood degree conducted by the council on 31 Aug 2009. The Committee on College Royal Arch Masonry reported that they would be giving classes at the January Workshop. They also requested permission to create an online course. Permission was granted.

The Committee on Constitution and By Laws reported that there were numerous typos and grammatical errors. The dress for Grand sessions as well as the Zone management concept need to be entered, then the document need to be revised and printed for 2012.

The Committee on Priesthood degree reported that newly elected EHP Harrie J Turner of A. J. Junious #70 of Jacksonville had the Priesthood degree conferred on him. The Committee on Education requested continuation of support by the Grand Chapter For the L. Henry Gray scholarship. They also requested that the local chapters also contribute to the scholarship.

The Past Grand High Priest Council Committee approved of Phillips Chapter #168 Name change to Carl Finerson Chapter 168, and that the approved recommendation be

forwarded to the Charter and Dispensation committee for action. They further recommended that Guidelines and procedures for name changing of Chapters be developed.

The Committee on Auditing revealed some very small but non threatening issues. They recommended continued refining of the Secretary and Treasure processes to facilitate more in-depth audits that will allow for more visibility of transactions.

The Committee on Jewel Contest reported that the contest was won by chapter #168 of Melbourne. The committee recommended that the rules need to be updated to clearly indicate in Section IX what the first and second place winners will receive.

The Committee on Royal Arch Benevolence makes the following report. As of this report there are 48 members on the roll and that there is \$6,129.80 in the account. There were 9 recommendations from this committee. I will read only two.

That the yearly membership fee be increased from \$13.00 to \$15.00 per year. That the name be changed to the MEUGC Benevolent Hardship Fund. The other seven recommendations are procedural and organizational in nature that will require close scrutiny and discussion.

Upon completion of the Committee Reports, DGM Walter Gulley held the election for the MEUGC. All Elected Officers of the MEUGC were re-elected and the appointed officers were reappointed. After installation, a prayer of solidarity and unity was offered by Grand Chaplain Rev Elvin J. Parker and the companions departed with traveling grace from MEGHP Henry B. Parker.

## The MEUGC 109<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation 2011

On Monday Evening April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the 109<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation kicked off with a wedding ceremony that saw MWGM Anthony T. Stafford return the Heroines of Jericho to the control of the MEUGC of Holy Royal Arch Masons. Prior to this venture, the MEUGC HRAM had no female counterpart. GM Stafford actually portrayed the father and actually marched down the aisle with GMAM Jacquelyn P. Strappy on his arm and presented her to MEGHP Henry B. Parker. The ceremony actually involved all the Grand officers of both departments. After the wedding there was a reception that sealed the transaction with a toast. And thus it was written.

On Tuesday morning, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 7A.M, the Eight Annual Joint Memorial Service honoring those that had given their last true measure of devotion were Memorialized with the ceremonial lighting and extinguishing of the candles by MEGHP Parker and GMAM Strappy. At the closing of the ceremony, a charitable donation, consisting of 100 cases of Ensure that was donated by each chapter was given to a local Senior Citizen Home Rep.

At 10:00 A.M. the MEUGC Occasional Chapter was opened at the Temple and at 1030A.M. DGHP Lewis Thurston entered and then received MEGHP Parker, who then brought in his cabinet and guest. MEGHP D. John Hamilton and Grand Scribe Fisher from Mississippi was the guest of MEGHP Parker. The rules of the day were then called for by MEGHP Parker. At the conclusion of the Rules of the Day by PMEGHP Maxwell, the committee reports began.

### Committee Reports:

- 1 The Historical report for the 108<sup>th</sup> Convocation was given by PGHP Eugene C. Johnson and the committee, and accepted by the craft. After the closing of the Grand Convocation, the report was sent to the Web Master (Deputy Hardee) to be added and posted for all to read and or pull the entire up to date copy as desired.
- 2 The Time and Place Committee reported that the 2012 Grand Convocation would be held April 17-18 at 410 Broad Street in Jacksonville FL. The York Rite Workshop will be held January 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> of 2012. At Crown Plaza Hotel.
- 3 Hurricane and National Disaster Relief Committee reported, that in case of Hurricane, Typhoon, Flood etc, the local EHP must report the disaster to the Grand Chapter who will act accordingly after reviewing the incident.
- 4 Grievances and Appeals Submitted a negative report
- 5 The Committee on CCFC sent out five Communications and received five pieces of communications from Foreign Bodies.
- 6 Education and Charity Committee recommended that the MEUGC support the Reginald E. Johnson Memorial Scholarship of Melbourne with a \$1,000.00 donation annually, payable by 1 April each year. As per the MEGHP request, each chapter in the jurisdiction will select a Public Library, and make a quarterly

donation of \$100.00 for purchasing books during the year 2012. The MEUGC will support the MWUGL Scholarship program, by donating a book stipend, not to exceed \$1,500.00, to be paid to the MWUGL in January of each year.

- 7 Constitution and By Laws submitted the following: several typographical errors and grammatical errors exist, changes for associate membership, dress during the grand sessions, establishment of Zones and duties of Zone administrators, new issues and concerns arising in the jurisdiction, are not addressed in the Constitution, and not turned over to the PGHP Council. Lastly, after these corrections are made, it was recommended that the document be reprinted.
- 8 Resolution Committee submitted a negative report. None received.
- 9 Committee on Grand High Priest Allocution indorsed the following recommendations, the RABA increase to \$10000.00 effective Jan 2012. The payout plan will be as follows: after one year membership \$250.00, two years \$500.00, three years \$750.00, four years \$1000.00 Companions exalted or reinstated prior to 2011, their beneficiary will receive the full payout. Effective immediately, all companions will discontinue to pay yearly to the Benevolent Fund, and all monies collected this date [19] April will be returned. Any companion with five consecutive years of service with the MEUGC is eligible to become a life member by paying an initial fee of \$1000.00 the program is limited to the first twenty four companions. The final edict of MEGHP Parker was, that the MEUGC and the Local Chapters honor all request to give the final burial rites, regardless of the Companions financial status upon his demise.
- 10 The Past Grand High Priest Council reported that the Priesthood Degree was bestowed upon Comp Walter Gulley, Kendall T Moore, Calvin Atkinson, Leroy Leach and Lacaster Carr.
- 11 The Committee on Exaltation reported that 250 brothers were exalted during the York Rite workshop. None were exalted during the 109<sup>th</sup> session.
- 12 The Committee on Administrative Handbook recommended that revisions be submitted at the upcoming workshop, so an update can be presented at the next annual session.
- 13 The Committee on Jurisprudence, Charters and Dispensations Recommended that Companions Thomas Sanders and David Alexander, both 90 years old, of Brown Chapter #48 be exempted. Also approved The Uniformed Local by Laws of Dan Aaron Chapter #203. The Committee further approved the Recommendation that Deborah Chapter #10, name be changed to Anthony T. Stafford Chapter #10.
- 14 The Committee on Jewel Contest recommended that Section IX, Rules Governing Jewel Contest Winnings/winners should read, that the total amount earned or split is \$255.00 vs. \$275.00, Also that the Alternate award of a Hotel room and Registration for the Grand Convocation be written in Section IX of the procedure.
- 15 The Necrology Committee reported that seven (7) Companions of the MEUGC had gone home to be with the Grand High Priest of the Universe.

After the completion of the Committee reports, PMEGHP Finerson asked for permission to address the Companions, reference a concern of compassion. MEPGHP Finerson

asked all the local Royal Arch Chapters upon returning home, to send a card to Companions Albert Cobb, George Wells, Johnny King and Freddy Lamarr.

Upon making his final remarks, MEGHP Parker introduced M.W. Grand Master Stafford for his remarks and performing of the election for the Grand Chapter. Grand Master Stafford stated that he was elated at the Grand High Priest generous decision to donate \$1500.00 to the Grand Lodge for scholarship purpose. He also thanked the Grand High Priest for exempting the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Senior Grand Warden and Junior Grand Warden from dues in their Local Chapters. After making a few other comments about the growth of Holy Royal Arch and its future, Grand Master Stafford conducted the election. He waived all the rules and declared that all Grand elected officers would succeed themselves. There was no opposition to this declared waiver. Grand Master Stafford then asked MEGHP Parker if there were any changes in his appointed officers. The appointed officers remained the same with the addition of: Companion Kendall T. Moore and Comp Leroy Leach who were appointed as legal advisors. Comp Lacaster Carr was appointed Assistant Treasurer. Grand Master then installed the entire re-elected, reappointed and newly appointed officer.

The gavel was then returned to MEGHP Parker who thanked the craft for their support and said he intended to work even harder for the next 12 months to enhance Holy Royal Masonry to grow and continue to be functional in Support of the MWUGL of Florida.

At 4:45 PM the 109<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation for 2011 was closed with a prayer of Grace, and Mercy by the Grand Chaplin, Dr,

## The MEUGC 110<sup>TH</sup> Grand Convocation 2012

The 110<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation began with a Testimonial Banquet in honor of MEGHP Henry B. Parker; there was no Executive Board Meeting as has been the norm. The Banquet was filled with glitter and glamour as the members gave honor through their own testimony in their own way, to include Past Most excellent Grand High Priest Maxwell, Mc Cray, Finerson and MWGM Anthony T. Stafford.

Wednesday Morning, (18 April) after the attendance of a joint Memorial Service with the Heroines of Jericho, MEGHP Parker entered the Occasional Grand Chapter that was opened by Stafford Chapter #10 at 10:15. At 10:35, MEGHP Parker directed Rev Elvin Parker, Chaplain, to give a word of prayer. After prayer MEGHP Parker proclaimed that the 110<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation Officially opened.

After officially opening, MEGHP Parker recognized the 5 newly made members from Belize. A total of 28 companions were exalted, their crowns were placed on the Altar and Grand Chaplin Elvin Parker proceeded to consecrate the Crowns. Roll call was taken and there were 31 chapters present. Roll call for the Deputies was also taken. MEGHP Parker directed Grand Secretary Lewis to proceed with Committee Reports, and that some reports may have to be given at the Work shop.

The Rules of the Day report was given by PMEGHP Maxwell followed by the CCFC report given by CCFC Chair Comp Loper. The Jurisprudence Committee Report contains one recommendation, which was, to ensure HRAM followed the Blue house in Scheduling of Grand Sessions. This will require the Grand Masters response. The Budget report was given and approved with no unreadiness. The Audit Committee reported that all funds were accounted for. Comp Grayson was given applause. The Benevolent Committee stated that there was one outstanding transaction, but they would make one more attempt to collect before recommending it be written off. Life Membership Committee presented new Lapel pins to MEGHP Parker, who in Turn gave one to each of his elected Cabinet members. The pins were then placed on sale to the membership.

At 12:20 the Grand Master and his cabinet entered. After greetings by the Grand Master, the gavel was returned to MEGHP Parker, who then delivered his Allocution. The Recommendations were received by the craft but no response was given due to an attempt to shorten the session. MEGHP Parker stated that a recap of the Allocution and the recommendations would be sent to each Chapter after grand session.

The registration Committee reported that 29 Chapters preregistered and 3 registered on site giving a total of 167 total registered membership cards for each companion was given to each Deputy with a cost attached upon distribution. There was a special decree by MEGHP Parker that Companion Leroy Lee was suspended and his PHP title removed. The Necrology committee reported that 10 Companions were deceased.



All business concluded, the gavel was passed to MWGM Stafford to hold election. All elected and appointed officers except Grand Chapter Chaplin Parker who asked to be relieved, were reelected and installed by Grand Master Stafford. Upon receiving the gavel, MEGHP Parker appointed Rev. PHP Ernest Powell as Grand Chaplain. All minds clear, Grand Chaplain Powell was called on for prayer and the Grand High Priest closed the Grand session.

At the 2012 Installation Weekend on 25 Aug, the Priest Hood Degree was administered to 12 newly elected Excellent High Priests by the Past Grand High Priest Council. Also there was training for District Grand Instructors, Excellent High Priests, Kings and Scribes as well as Secretaries and Treasurers. Prior to the closure all elected EHP and their elected local officers were installed by MEGHP Parker.

At the HRAM York Rite Workshop, which was 11 Jan 2013, The PGHP Council performed the Consecration Ceremony for the New EHP whose Crowns, Collars and Aprons had not been consecrated. The Ceremonial team consisted of PMEGHP Finerson, PMEGHP Maxwell, PMEGHP Mc Cray, PGHP Johnson and PGHP Loper. During this workshop 31 Companions received their Holy Royal Arch Degree.

## MEUGC HRAM 111<sup>TH</sup> GRAND CONVOCATION for 2013

At 1:00 PM on April 15, 2013, Mt. Horeb Chapter HRAM opened the 111th Grand Convocation of the MEUGC HRAM in occasional form. At 1:15 pm MEGHP Henry B. Parker was escorted in. He then brought in his guest, MEGHP Willie Tate of Texas, MEGHP D. John Hamilton of Mississippi, DGHP Fisher, who is also the Most Ex Grand Thrice of Mississippi, and Gen Conference Grand High Priest Roosevelt Huggins

After bestowing Grand honors upon his guest, MEGHP Parker directed the Grand Secretary to call the roll of Grand officers, Deputies and Chapters. After determining there were sufficient present for a quorum, MEGHP Parker declared that the 111th Grand convocation was officially open, and directed the Grand Secretary to call for the reports as listed.

Grand Sec Elton Lewis gave the Rules of Order Report because PMEGHP Maxwell had death in his family and was on excused absence. The report was received and accepted by the entire body. The Jurisprudence Committee stated they had one issue, and they had turned it over to the PGHP Council for study and directions. The Grand CCFC reported that he had sent out and received numerous communications. He advised the District Deputies to be on short alert for request he may forward to them from other jurisdictions that may require immediate action. The Secretary and Treasurer Reports were passed out in the registration kits. There were no questions or negative concerns. The body accepted both reports. At the start of the Audit Report, Grand Master Stafford alarmed the door. The report was halted and Grand Master Stafford was escorted in, given the Grand Honors and given the gavel. He returned the gavel to MEGHP Parker, who instructed the Audit committee to continue with their report.

The Audit report was continued and it supported the fine job the Secretary and Treasurer had done. The Report had two recommendations [1] That Zone accounts be discontinued, [2] That the check for the Rosewood Foundation in honor of Past Grand Treasure Brown be re-written. Both were received and voted on positively by the body.

Upon receipt of the Audit Report by the body, MEGHP Parker gave his Allocution, which was overwhelmingly received, along with the three recommendations, which were to add language to the following Constitution areas. [1] That to dissolve the PHP Council required 2/3rd vote from the Body, [2] That dress for opening would be White Coat, Black Trousers with Red Bow Tie, [3] That to dissolve the York Rite Workshop would require 2/3rd vote of the Body.

After the entire Body heard the Allocution and voted positive on the three recommendations, Grand Master Stafford held the election. There was a motion for all elected officers to succeed them self. The motion was challenged to the point that the position of Grand Scribe was being sought by other Companions and was not to be included in said motion. The motion for all positions except the Grand Scribe to

succeed them self was voted upon and accepted by the entire body. In the aftermath of challenge by Comp Sec. Lewis, Sitting Grand Scribe Walter Russell held his seat by a vote of 80 to 16. Grand Master Stafford then allowed MEGHP Parker to select his appointed officer. All were reappointed and at 3P.M. Grand Master Stafford installed elected and appointed officers of the MEUGC HRAM.

Upon receiving the gavel, MEGHP Parker presented a check for \$1000.00 to the Grand Master for the Knights of Pythagoras. Upon receiving the check, and thanking the companions and their Leader for their diligence and support. The Grand Master and his cabinet departed to hold the election for Jerusalem Grand Chapter OES.

Upon the Grand Masters departure, MEGHP Parker gave his guest and Department heads an opportunity to address the body. At 4:30 PM the Grand Convocation was closed with a prayer from the Grand Chaplin, Companion Powell.

Special Note: The Joint HRAM and HOJ Memorial Service were not held during this Convocation, because of a need to shorten the session.

On 31 August 2013, all elected and re elected officer of each Chapter assembled at the MEUGC at 410 Broad Street Jacksonville Florida for the purpose of being installed by MEGHP Henry B. Parker. At that session the Priest Hood Degree Team with PMEGHP Carl Finerson presiding. Eleven newly elected Excellent High Priest received the Priest Hood Degree. And one companion was given the Honorary Priest Hood degree.

On 11 October 2013, at the District 6 Work Shop and Grand High Priest visitation in Melbourne Florida, MEGHP Parker directed PMEGHP Finerson and PGHP Johnson to bestow the Priesthood Degree upon PHP R. Girard Dixon, PHP Charles E. Hood and PHP Michael A Griffin. A Modified version was given with the understanding, that all three would appear at the 2014 Installation Weekend to witness the entire Priest Hood Degree Ceremony.

At York Rite WORK Shop weekend January 2014, two historical events took place. On Friday, 10 January 2014, fifty-eight new Companions were exalted. On Saturday 11 January, after Zone 3 Ceremonial Team opened the Occasional Chapter, MEGHP Parker shocked the entire body, by stating effective immediately he was resigning from the position of Grand High Priest. He passed his resignation to PMEGHP Finerson and directed him to hold an election immediately to fill the position of Grand High Priest for the MEUGC HRAM of Florida in accordance with the Constitution. PMEGHP Finerson immediately briefed the body on the constitutional procedures and what was required, and called for a nomination for the position of Grand High Priest.

PMEGHP Johnny M Cray nominated PGHP Eugene C. Johnson, going once, going twice going three times, with no other nomination. PMEGHP Finerson directed the Grand Secretary, Dr. Lewis, to cast one unanimous ballot for Eugene C. Johnson. Thus was done and the gavel sounded to close the procedure. Newly elected MEGHP Johnson was escorted out of the session, taken to the office of the MEGHP and

properly dressed in the Robe and Garments of the Grand High Priest, escorted back to the session, brought in front of the Altar and the Installation was performed by PMEGHP Finerson. MEGHP Johnson was given the grand honors, then escorted to the Dias and Podium, presented the Gavel and the agenda to preside over the workshop. All of this was done in the presence of Grand Master Anthony T. Stafford who sanctioned the entire procedure.

MEGHP Johnson presided over the entire session as was laid out on the Tressel Board. Prior to the last agenda item, MEGHP Johnson thanked the body for the faith and trust they placed in him by electing him and allowing him to preside. He explained that it was to great of a task for him to perform at the pace he did this day for 365 days per year, and that was what the position of Grand High Priest called for. Thus he was turning in his resignation. After turning in his resignation to PMEGHP Finerson, the Constitution automatically required an election for the position. PMEGHP McCray nominated PMEGHP Parker for Grand High Priest. With no opposition, PMEGHP Parker was elected, installed and finished the last item on the agenda, which was the Grand High Priest hour of power, which was a question and answer session. After final remarks by Grand Master Stafford, Grand Chaplin Powell, at the pleasure of MEGHP Parker closed the workshop with prayer.

## **MEUGC HRAM 112<sup>TH</sup> GRAND CONVOCATION FOR 2014**

The 112<sup>th</sup> HRAM Grand Convocation began with a joint Banquet with the Gran Chapter of Heroines of Jericho, which also featured the Joint King and Queen contest. PHP Willie Parlor of Finerson Chp 168 HRAM MELBOURNE Florida, won the King Crown for the 4<sup>th</sup> year [2012 and 2013 back to back].

At 2pm EHP Theodis Baker of St James #26 with his district team opened the Occasional Chapter. At 2:30 pm MEGHP Parker entered and brought in his guest, MEGHP Pettis of Alabama and DGHP Fisher of Mississippi. After receiving his guest, MEGHP Parker immediately asked for committee reports.

Time and Place led of stating that the York Rite Workshop will be held in Jacksonville in January of 2015 and the 113<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation will be held in Jacksonville in April of 2015.

The Rules and Order Committee decreed that all Companions would be on time, courteous and appropriately dressed for all sessions. The Jurisprudence Committee reported they received two items requiring action and they were turned over to the PHP Council for review and action. CCFC reported that numerous in and out correspondence was acted upon by his office. Registration reported that 173 Companions registered. Necrology reported that 13 Companions crossed over to that everlasting Grand Chapter in the great beyond. The Treasure and Secretary reports were received favorably with no questions. The treasurer stated that the account has been transferred from Bank of America to Fargo bank to eliminate the monthly service charge. Membership reported that we have a total of 890 companions on role. In the middle of receiving the report PMWGM Michael Moored enter the session At 4:40 pm DGHP Thurston presented MEGHP Parker for his delivery of his final allocution, which was preceded by a prayer from Grand Chaplin Powell. MEGHP Parker delivered an electrifying allocution, which was received by the companions, voted upon and turned over to the PHP Council for their analysis and report. At 5:30 pm the session was called off until 0800 hours April 15<sup>th</sup>.

At 8:30 am 15 April 2014, the session was called on with a moving spiritual message from Grand Chaplin Powell. The committee reports were continued with a report from the Historical Committee, which included the stepping down of MEGHP Parker from the position of Grand High Priest on 14 January 2014, and the election of Companion Eugene C. Johnson, to the position of MEGHP. Upon being elected to the Grand High Priest position JOHNSON served the entire York Rite Session, only to request to step down for personal reasons prior to closing. PMEGHP Parker was re elected after PMEGHP Johnson request was accepted and acted upon, and MEGHP Parker closed out the session. This was truly an Historical Occasion, all taking place with MW Grand Master Stafford being present.

The Audit Committee gave a partial report, which was caused by the books being given to CPA Grayson during the height of the tax-reporting period, and he forgot to complete the task. A final report will be prepared and given ASAP. It was recommended that a six-month reconciliation be initiated to ensure every thing financial is on tract. The recommendation was accepted by the craft.

At 09:15, MW Grand Master Stafford and his staff returned from conducting the OES Election. PMEGHP Johnson was directed by MEGHP Parker to give the Grand Honors to Grand Master Stafford. PMEGHP Johnson broke tradition and gave the Blue House Honors instead of the Red Hour Honors.

PMEGHP Johnny McCray presented the report from the Committee on Grand High Priest address. It was received with a standing round of applause. This being the last report, the gavel was turned over to Grand Master Stafford to hold election. Grand Master gave a very short speech, centered around the need for Holy Royal Arch Masonry to continue to put the Holy back into Masonry because he felt it was greatly needed. He then called Grand Chaplin Powell to render prayer and he commenced to perform the election.

The process went as follows:

Grand Master declared all seats vacant and requested a nomination for the position of Most Excellent High Priest. PMEGHP Parker entered the name of DGHP Thurston for the position. Without any opposition and having three chances to nominate another, the nomination was closed on the one name. After the casting of one unanimous ballot Grand Master Stafford sounded the gavel and decreed that companion Lewis Sherwin Thurston had been elected as Most Excellent Grand High Priest. The same process was used to elect Comp Enoch Mobley to the position of Deputy Grand High Priest, and the same process was used to elect Comp Walter Russell to the position of Grand King. For the position of Grand Scribe there were two nominees. Comp James H. Minus and Comp Dr. Elton Lewis. Companion Lewis won by a count of 53 to 9 to become the Grand Scribe, Comp Deron Mosely was elected Grand Secretary and Comp Peter Bruton was elected Grand Treasurer and Rev Companion Ernest Powell was reelected Grand Chaplin.

Grand Master Stafford asked MEGHP Thurston if he was prepared to make his appointments, the answer was yes and MEGHP Thurston made all of his appointments. Grand Master then directed all elected and appointed officers come to the altar wherein he proceeded to install all in order of position. After the election and installation was completed. PMEGHP Finerson, Maxwell, McCray, Parker and Johnson performed the Ceremony of Consecration for all the new Crowns, Collars, and Aprons that were presented to companions in their new positions.

Upon being given the gavel, newly elected MEGHP Thurston gave an incoming Allocution with his goals and received a thundering applause from the body. He then asked all his PMEGHP for their blessings and comments if there were any. Grand

Chaplin Powell was then called upon to give a closing prayer filled with traveling grace and mercy. At 10:30 all were dismissed and the 112<sup>th</sup> Grand Convocation was closed.

Installation Weekend Program was held on 6 September 2014. The theme was Rededication, Education and Participation. The program began at 7:00 am with the Priest Hood Degree being bestowed upon 28 newly elected Excellent High Priest by PMEGHP Carl Finerson and his degree team. After the normal opening and greetings ceremony at 9:00 am, the day was filled with break out groups instruction to include District Deputies, Excellent High Priests, Kings, Scribes, Secretaries, Treasuries, as well as the role of Joshuas and Court Directors. The weekend was closed with and Illuminating Gala Testimonial for Grand Most Ancient Matron Jacqueline Strappy who will step down in April of 2015.

MEUGC HRAM York Rite workshop began on Thursday 8 January with an Executive Board meeting with total focus on the signs and the correct position of the body while executing the signs. The position of the hands when receiving wages and the casting of the rod, were given an abundance of attention. The bottom line was that the signs would be done IAW with MEGHP Thurston desires, which were demonstrated by Grand Instructor Hammond.

Beneficiary changing procedures were explained and DGHP Mobley stated the Hand Book had been updated and encouraged all companions to purchase a copy, which explained all administrative and operational procedures of the MEUGC. Comp Dr. Elton Lewis presented an overview of the newly designed of College of Holy Royal Arch Masonry Program. Special guest were General Grand Conference DGHP, Leslie Dean and DGHP Hutchins of the Grand Bahamas.

On Friday, 9 January 2015 Grand Scribe, Dr. Elton Lewis, presented a comprehensive overview of the revised College of Holy Royal Masonry. Open enrollment immediately followed the presentation with classes being taught the remainder of the day.

To round out the workshop, a Charity and Recognition banquet was held. A \$500.00 check was donated to the Lupus Foundation of Tallahassee and PMEGHP Charles T. Maxwell and PGMAM Thelma Sheffield were lauded and toasted for their many years of faithful service as well as their continuous service.

At 5:00 pm, MEGHP Thurston declared the work shop closed and Grand Chaplin Powell was directed to give a closing prayer with traveling Grace.